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# THE PSALMS Fides Translation

#### Introduction by Mary Perkins Ryan

The Fides Translation of the Psalms has been made in accordance with the new Roman Psalter. Its special purpose is to provide a clear, modern translation that gives due attention to the requirements not only of individual reading, but also of recitation aloud and of singing.

The introduction and notes are by a layman—for the guidance of other laymen who have tried to pray the Psalms and found it difficult, or who have never tried at all. The material has been gathered from the teaching and writings of men learned in Holy Scripture, in order to answer the questions that usually arise in the mind of ordinary Catholics when they try to appreciate the Psalms and to use them as their prayers.

In her introduction, Mary Perkins Ryan prefers to call the Psalms "God's Songs." She thinks of them as the songs which God Himself composed for His people of all times and places to sing to Him. The Psalms, too, are the very prayers Our Lord Himself and His Blessed

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Mother used during their life on earth.

The Psalms are not "nice," or "sweet," or "pretty," or even "pious," in the modern sense of the word. They do not give a warm glow of pleasant emotion, nor a comfortable sense of satisfaction with the way things are going. Rather, the Psalms are strong, violent, beautiful, virile. They describe things as they are. They present life as a struggle, not an arm-chair meditation; as a battle. not a tidy exhibition game. They will not allow us to be little or shallowminded, frivolous or lazy or selfcentered. They will, instead, train us for real and Christian living in a real and unChristian world.

To help us pray the Psalms, Mary Perkins Ryan has explained some of the key words and themes, which have taken on deeper meanings since the coming of Christ than were apparent to the People of the Old Testament.

Note: The white binding on The Psalms can be wiped clean with a damp cloth.

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## THE PSALMS FIDES TRANSLATION

### THE PSALMS

#### FIDES TRANSLATION



Introduction and notes by MARY PERKINS RYAN

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#### NIHIL OBSTAT

Eugene Burke, C.S.C., S.T.D.

#### **IMPRIMATUR**

John Francis Noll, D.D., Archbishop-Bishop of Fort Wayne, Indiana

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#### PREFATORY NOTE

The Fides translation of the Psalms has been made in accordance with the New Roman Psalter. Its special purpose is to provide a clear, modern translation that gives due attention to the requirements not only of individual reading, but also of recitation aloud and of singing.

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#### PRAYING THE PSALMS

#### WHAT ARE THEY?

The poems contained in this book might better be called "God's Songs" than Psalms. For if we think of them as the songs which God Himself composed for His people of all times and places to sing to Him, we have a much more accurate idea of what the Psalms really are than if we think of them as a collection of hymns written hundreds of years ago in a strange language. And, if we think of them as the songs given by God to His people, it is obvious that they must be more pleasing to Him, more beautiful, useful and satisfying to us, than any prayers men could compose by themselves.

If we were to find a book containing the very prayers that Our Lord Himself used during His life on earth, we should certainly begin at once to study those prayers with the most intense interest, to pray them with the most reverent attention. What wonderful prayers they would be, to have been worthy of His voice, of His imagination, of His mind! But in the book of Psalms we actually do possess Our Lord's Own prayers: the prayers that He said with His Mother and St. Joseph every morning, every night, every meal-time, every feast day during all the years of His hidden life, the prayers that He said with His Apostles during His public life, and at the Last Supper, the prayers that He quoted oftener than any other book of the Old Testament, the prayers that came to His lips on the Cross.

Or, again, if some scholar were to discover "Our Lady's Prayer-book," every Christian would want to have it published, so that he could own and use it. What a privilege it would be to study and pray the very prayers that Our Lady herself knew and loved, that she taught to her Divine Child, that she recited with Him

and St. Joseph, that she prayed to Him all her years on earth after the Ascension. But whenever we pray the Psalms, we actually do enjoy this privilege; the Psalms were indeed Our Lady's prayer-book. And the glorious prayer of her own composing, the *Magnificat*, is itself a proof of how well she knew the Psalms and had made them her own, for their whole essence is summed up in this song of hers.

Or if someone were to assemble in one book the favorite prayers of all our favorite saints—of St. Joseph, St. Peter, St. Anthony, St. Therese—how popular such a book would be. But when we pray the Psalms, we are actually praying the favorite prayers of all these saints, prayers that they used and loved far more than prayers that may be called by their names.

#### WHAT ARE THE PSALMS LIKE?

Prayers given us by God, used by our Lord, by His Mother and all His saints, the Psalms are all this; and yet many of us, alas, were not brought up to have them in our hearts and on our lips, to know and use even some of them next to the Our Father and the Hail Mary. For while the Psalms have continued to be the main substance of the official prayer of the Church all through the centuries, popular piety during the last few hundred years has certainly used the Psalms less and less with each succeeding generation. But the tide has now turned, thank God, and more and more lay people today, as well as priests and religious, are coming to know and love and use the Psalms as their own prayers.

And it is perhaps, at least in part, those very qualities of the Psalms which were responsible for their unpopularity during the last few generations which are now responsible for their great appeal to those who discover them afresh today. For the Psalms are not "nice"; they are not "sweet"; they are not "pretty"; they do not seem at all "pious" in the poor modern use of that word. They do not give the reader a warm glow of pleasant emotion, nor a comfortable sense of satisfaction with the way things are going with himself and the world. They do not bear out any

notions he might have that progress is inevitably taking place with no effort on his part, or that "every day in every way things are growing better and better." Rather, the Psalms are strong, violent, beautiful, virile; they describe things as they are, and they show us how things ought to be without any possible confusion between the two orders.

In other words, the Psalms are realistic, realistic with God's Own realism. They present life as a struggle, not an arm-chair meditation; as a battle, not a tidy exhibition game. If we pray them consistently, they will not leave us unaware of any aspect of reality which we should hold in our consciousness as mature Christians, members of sinful and suffering humanity and also members of Christ, called to cooperate in His redeeming work. The Psalms will not let us ignore any part of God's plan for mankind; they will not allow us to be little or shallow-minded; they will not let us remain frivolous or lazy or self-centered. They will, instead, train us for real and Christian living in a real and un-Christian world.

And the Psalms will also give us that training in true Christian hope which we all need, and now know that we need. Our special temptation today is not so much to shallow optimism as to despair. And if our piety has been that unawakened and childish kind which believes that God has promised to make everything go smoothly for us if we try to be good, then this temptation to despair will find us an easy prey. But the Psalms will help to lead us out of such immature piety into a real Christlike trust in God's real Plan and real Providence. "Was it not fitting that Christ should suffer all these things and so enter into His glory?" is how Our Lord Himself summed up the message of Holy Scripture concerning Him. This is the lesson of the Psalms, the lesson we need so much today. God has promised to be with us in trouble, not in short-cuts around it; only after Christ has been with us in our troubles so that we may share in His sufferings, will He save us and glorify us; only by His Passion and Cross are we to be brought to the glory of His Resurrection.

So the Psalms give us real hope, not only for ourselves, but for all suffering, struggling, distressed mankind. They make us burn with God's Own desire for justice, for "rightness," for holiness; they send us out better fitted to be the intelligent and efficient instruments of His comfort to the afflicted, His care for the widow and orphan, His judgment for the poor and oppressed. And, at the same time, they take the futility and hopelessness out of our necessarily puny efforts, for they teach us that God will Himself fulfill them in His Own good time, that Christ Our Lord is even now reigning, and that He will soon appear again in glory to make all things right and new.

#### HOW CAN CHRISTIANS PRAY THE PSALMS?

We might agree, however, that all these values are to be found in the Psalms, and yet have no idea about how to pray them. But when we consider God's whole plan for the salvation of mankind, then we can begin to see how it is that these songs, written hundreds of years ago by people of an entirely different mentality and environment from ours, can yet be valid for our own prayer and praise.

For God has one and the same great plan for all men in all ages—salvation in Christ. And He has, accordingly, ordered the development of this plan in such a way that its preparatory stages in the Old Testament, its accomplishment by Christ, and its extension through the Church to mankind (and to us here and now)—all display the same basic pattern and contain the same realities, but in different degrees of revelation and actualization.

The vital focus of God's plan is Christ Himself, the Incarnate Son of God. The central design of God's plan is Christ's redemption of the People of God: His Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension into heaven.

By Baptism and the other Sacraments, Christ redeems each of us; He gives us a new life, the life of children of God, members of His People; He stamps the pattern of the redemption upon our being and upon our lives. And He Himself, living and glorious at the right hand of the Father, by the Holy Spirit, using the means of grace, the circumstances of our lives and our own cooperation, is conforming us to Himself, so that by enabling us to

share in His Passion and death, He may bring us all to the glory of His Resurrection.

Before the Incarnation, all during the centuries of the Old Testament, God sent His word through leaders and prophets and events, to redeem His People from slavery, to form them, to teach them, guide them, forgive them, save them from the consequences of their sins again and again. And He did this in such a way that these deeds of His were at once a preparation for and a progressive revelation of the Redemption that was to be accomplished by the Incarnate Word. This is the same Redemption that Christ is even now extending to all mankind; the Redemption that will finally be completed in all its perfection when Christ returns in glory.

Holy Scripture is, then, the record of God's dealings with His People in the Old Testament and in the New, of the "common experience of God and mankind." \* But it is not a mere record; it is God Himself, through His chosen instruments, the inspired writers, speaking to us about this common experience in order that we may enter more fully into His plan, that we may rejoice in it, praise Him for it, thank Him for it and give ourselves wholeheartedly to taking our part in it.

Many of us have a vague idea that, since God has revealed everything we need to know through Christ and the Church, there is nothing to be gained by meditating on what preceded His coming. This is simply a false impression. The New Testament itself, the liturgy of the Church, and constant Christian tradition all refer us to the Old Testament as well as to the New for instruction, for warning, for encouragement. "For whatever things have been written have been written for our instruction, that through the patience and the consolation afforded by the Scriptures we may have hope (Rom. 15:4)." "Now these things came to pass as examples to us (1 Cor. 10:6)." "Now all these things happened to them as a type, and they were written for our correction, upon whom the final age of the world has come (1 Cor. 10:11)."

<sup>\*</sup> From Liturgical Piety by Rev. Louis Boyer, Orat. (Notre Dame Univ. Press).

And therefore the Church, following the lesson given her by Our Lord Himself and the Apostles, has always given her children in the Liturgy itself the "Bread of the Word" from the Old Testament and the New; and she usually does so in such a way that the two phases of God's plan are given so as to show us how they explain one another. Take, for example, the Mass of Friday in the fourth week of Lent: The Lesson tells us how the prophet Elias, by effortful prayer, raised a boy to life; the Gospel gives us Christ Himself by His word raising Lazarus to life. The whole Mass was designed for the instruction of the candidates soon to be baptized at the Easter Vigil, to give them a picture from the Old Testament and an image from the New of what Christ was to do for them in Baptism.

For the wonders that Christ is doing for us here and now in the Sacraments are so great and marvellous that we cannot possibly appreciate them properly unless we take the means that God Himself has given us. Our need is not satisfied by abstract definitions, good as these are in their own place. We need to have our minds and hearts and imaginations informed by the actual concrete and vital "common experience of God and man" as God gives it to us in Holy Scripture and as the Church shows us how to receive it. We need to meditate on the images, the stories, the history of actual events, the metaphors inspired by God to describe spiritual things, the gradual unfolding and development of the great realities of our salvation. Otherwise our Christian living will be in danger of being dryly intellectual on the one hand and fantastically sentimental on the other, since only God can give us the right and true and properly affective ideas and images we need in order to become Christ's through and through.

It is no mere coincidence, then, in this age when the Holy Spirit through the voice of Popes and bishops, is summoning all the members of the Church, the *laos*, or people of God, to take their part in the salvation of mankind, that at the same time He is inspiring a renewal of active participation in the Liturgy and a renewal of the study and rightful use of Holy Scripture. For these three aspects of the Christian vocation all go together: taking our due part in the Mass, the renewal of Christ's redemptive

work; understanding more and more fully, from the prayerful reading of Holy Scripture under the guidance of the Church, the riches of God's plan and what our part in it should be; and working to carry out that plan in the world.

But of all the books of the Old Testament, the Psalms are the most frequently quoted by Our Lord and by the Apostles, and the most used in the Liturgy. For they not only contain all the realities of God's unfolding plan; they are also the response that God Himself has given us to make to His communication to us of that Plan and of His love. In the Mass, Christ makes Himself the Gift of His People to the Father. In the Psalms, the Word of God makes itself our prayer.

In the deepest sense, then, the Psalms are the songs of God's People offered to Him through our Head, through Christ, And they are the songs by which we are to respond to God's plan, to thank Him for it, to rejoice in Him for it, to show our sorrow and ask His forgiveness for having gone against it, to pray for its fulfillment in ourselves and all mankind. It is no wonder, then, that the Church uses the Psalms in every Mass. And it is no wonder that they have always formed the main substance of her official prayer. Priests and choir-religious are bound to pray the Psalms in the Divine Office, so that the Church's praise of God through Christ will always be carried out on earth, joining with the unceasing praise of the Church triumphant and of the holy angels in heaven. And when any member of the Church prays the Psalms, he is taking up his part in this unceasing prayer. We are also taking the best means to train ourselves in the whole art of Christian prayer, for the Psalms are a development of, a commentary on the phrases of the Our Father. And by praying the Psalms we are also taking the best means to train ourselves in reading the other books of the Bible, for, as St. Jerome said, the Psalms are the best summary of and introduction to a Christian's study of Holy Scripture.

Of course, whenever any member of Christ prays, with or without words, his prayer is united with the prayer of the whole Church; it becomes a part, so to speak, of that great action of prayer which is always ascending from the Church through her

Head to the Father in the love of the Holy Spirit, But Christian tradition tells us that insofar as this ineffable prayer of the whole Christ can be expressed in human words and images and concepts, the Holy Spirit expresses it in the Psalms, for our use. When we pray the Psalms, then, we are in a special way joining in the prayer of Christ and the Church. And also, every Psalm is voicing the actual present experience of some members of the Mystical Body; and so in praying it we are in a special way praying with those members and for them. Though we ourselves are not actually suffering persecution, when we pray the Psalms which voice the sufferings of Christ persecuted in the Church, we unite ourselves with our suffering brethren and their prayer. When we pray the Psalms of longing for God's presence, we share in the desires of the holiest members of the Church on earth and we voice the longing of the Holy Souls in Purgatory. When we pray the great psalms of joyful praise, we unite ourselves with our triumphant brethren, the saints, including our own beloved dead who are already living in heaven.

Nor does so praying the Psalms with and for all our fellowmembers of the Church stand in the way of our using them for our own personal needs. On the contrary, the more we pray them with the Church and her Head, and for the whole Church, the more we find them to be the voice of our own souls, fitting our own most personal needs from day to day.

Experience also shows that it is better to pray the Psalms according to some definite scheme; if we only pray them as they seem to fit our needs and moods, we are in danger of praying them seldom, or not at all. The simplest method, perhaps, is that of going through the Psalter day after day, taking, for example, three Psalms every morning and three every evening (dividing the longer ones into two, three or more parts). And then, when the whole Psalter has been prayed in this way, during the course of about a month, one begins it again. Another method is to pray the Psalms in accordance with the arrangement of the Divine Office. If we use the arrangement of the Roman Breviary, (see page 297) we are actually joining in the prayers of our own priests: our pastor, his assistants, our Bishop. Those who are

Benedictine Oblates might well prefer to pray the Psalms according to the traditional arrangement of the Monastic Breviary (see p. 299), so as to unite their prayers with those of their own monastic brethren. If saying all the Psalms of the Office each day is too much of a burden, it is quite possible to say one, rather than all the Psalms, of each Hour. But the important thing is to pray them somehow, and to do so regularly. Then we will truly begin to find them, as Fr. Thomas Merton so beautifully says, our "bread in the wilderness," and as the Eastern Church calls the Psalter, "the Heart of God."

#### THE PSALMS AS POETRY

In reading the Psalms as poetry, we have an advantage over every preceding generation of Christians. Centuries of scholarly research and study have resulted in the more perfect texts and the more perfect understanding of the literal meaning of Holy Scripture now available. Thanks to all this research, we can now follow the thought of each Psalm, and there are only a few verses in the Psalms whose meaning is still obscure. We need not, then, resort to that counsel of near despair which recommends finding some favorite verse or verses in each Psalm, and concentrating on these, not expecting or trying to follow the whole sequence of thought. This is, surely, not to do justice to the writer, or to the Holy Spirit!

We may wonder sometimes why God allowed His word of Holy Scripture to suffer so much from imperfect texts, translations and so on. The answer is, of course, that the history of the Word in Holy Scripture is analagous to that of the Word Incarnate. As Our Lord became "like us in all things save sin," as the Church now suffers the vicissitudes of a human institution, short of complete destruction, so God's word has endured the hazards of all human literature. But it has survived; and it is today undergoing, in the Providence of God, a kind of resurrection of renewed study and use among the faithful.

We may also wonder why God made it necessary for us to work in order to understand and appreciate His songs. Why did

He have them written so long ago, in an idiom seemingly so different from our own? And, again, the answer is that as Our Lord, in taking on a human nature, had to become a particular Man, of a special nation and time, born in a particular place, so God's songs had to be written by some particular human authors, in some particular language and idiom. God obviously must have chosen the most fitting language and the most suitable kind of poetic diction for His purposes. So it must be good for us to have to "Semitize" ourselves sufficiently to enter into the Psalmists' ways of thought and expression.

The Psalms were, as the name indicates, poems meant to be sung to a musical accompaniment (the Greek word means to pluck the strings of a harp or lyre). Some of them were composed directly for liturgical use in the Temple worship; some were later adapted to such use, none of them was to be read silently to oneself. When they were performed as public hymns, they were sung by choirs, probably several choirs, of both men and women, to the accompaniment of various kinds of musical instruments. We have no certain knowledge as to how they sounded when they were performed as their human authors first intended, but we do know they were meant to be sung aloud.

PARALLELISM. The most essential characteristic of Hebrew poetry is what is usually called parallelism, or echoism. A Hebrew poet cannot say something once only and then go on to another idea; he always finds it natural to repeat. Consider, for instance, Our Lady's song: "My soul proclaims the Lord's greatness, And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." The second half of the verse is the re-statement, the echo of the first. Sometimes the echo re-phrases the original idea; sometimes it says the opposite; sometimes it restates and advances the thought of the original. Sometimes whole lines echo other lines, and stanzas echo stanzas. In general, the chief kinds of parallelism follow the laws of association, or memory: similarity, contrast, contiguity, which is natural, since the Psalms were made to be repeated by heart, not read.

Another characteristic of the Psalms which may seem confusing at first is the Hebrew sense of time. The Hebrew mind did not think about time in the fairly neat categories of modern

grammar. Whenever possible, dramatic events of the past are described as taking place in the present (like a Damon Runyon story, or what scholars call the "historic present"). And when God has prophesied that something is going to happen, it is described as already happening, or as accomplished. This often holds true also of the Psalmist's hope that God will rescue him. He prays while in terrible difficulties; he describes himself as receiving help and giving thanks; then, at the end of the Psalm, again we find him in trouble—for deliverance has not yet come in actual fact, only in his confident hope that it will come in God's own time. One might say, indeed, that the Hebrew timesense is much closer than ours to God's eternal present.

#### AUTHORS AND TITLES OF THE PSALMS

In the original texts, and in most translations, the first verse of the majority of the Psalms consists of an author's name, and often another phrase or so which scholars take to be directions as to the kind of song, the use it was to be put to, or the melody to which it was to be sung. These notations are not part of the inspired text (in this book they will be found at the beginning of the explanatory note accompanying each Psalm); apparently scholars had lost any definite knowledge of the meaning of some of these notations even when the Septuagint translation was made two centuries before Christ. Yet they represent a very ancient tradition; and are not to be discarded. At the least, they can serve to remind us that the Psalms are meant to be sung.

There has been a great deal of controversy about the probable authorship of the Psalms, whether they could in any sense be really ascribed to the authors whose names are given in the titles, or even to a "school of" David, or Asaph. The most recent scholarship is turning more toward the traditional view, that the Psalms ascribed to David were actually written, or re-written by him, and so on. Until it is proved otherwise, it is certainly safer to hold to the traditional idea that the Psalms were in some way at least composed by the authors named in the titles. And, in any

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case, the Holy Spirit is the ultimate author, and we are quite certain of that!

#### KINDS OF PSALMS

There are various ways of classifying the Psalms, by author or "school," by literary *genre*, by their probable use in the worship of the Temple, etc. But for their use as our prayers, we might classify them roughly as follows.

PSALMS OF PRAISE. The Hebrew name for the Psalms is *The Praises*, and many of the Psalms are songs of unmixed praise. The Church uses these especially for Lauds, her hour of prayer for sunrise.

PSALMS OF THE HISTORY OF ISRAEL, recounting God's great deeds for His People, especially those of the Exodus, of the years of wandering in the desert, and of the occupation of the Promised Land. We pray these Psalms in gratitude for the wonders of our own redemption, and in sorrow for our repetition of the Israelites' sins of disobedience and mistrust.

#### THE SEVEN PENITENTIAL PSALMS.

PSALMS OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE, bringing into the light of God's Presence and God's plan the brevity, the seeming futility, the bewilderments of human life, especially the problem of the prosperity of the wicked.

PSALMS PLEADING FOR GOD'S HELP. When we first go through the Psalms, we may wonder if so many prayers for aid against "wicked and treacherous enemies" are really necessary in every-day life. But, as a matter of fact, the life of the Church on earth and of her members is one of almost incessant warfare "against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high." If we do not realize that we are constantly involved in this warfare, so much the worse for us. These Psalms, then, can do much to give us a truly realistic view of how much struggle our lives should contain against the evil in ourselves and in the world, while they teach us also how we are to ask God's help, constantly and confidently, in all our battles.

PSALMS OF THE SUFFERING SERVANT OF GOD, composed directly to

prophesy Our Lord's Passion and its fruits (Psalm 21), or to ask God's help for some great human servant of God in his own sufferings which were a type of Christ's. We pray these Psalms with Our Lord in His Passion and for His suffering members.

PSALMS DESCRIBING THE CONQUESTS AND RULE OF THE MESSIAH. We pray these in praise of Christ, asking Him to hasten His return in glory.

PSALMS OF THE KING, written by or for David or one of his descendants, who as the anointed King of Israel was a type of Our Lord. (see also page xxiv).

PSALMS OF LONGING FOR GOD'S PRESENCE, and PSALMS OF THE CITY OF GOD, the home of that Presence. We pray these Psalms in praise of the Church, and of Our Lady; in thanksgiving for the grace that has made us members of the Church; in longing for the vision and secure enjoyment of God's presence forever in heaven, together with all His saints.

#### KEY-WORDS AND THEMES

In order to pray the Psalms, it may be helpful to consider some of the key-words and themes, and to see how, as the new People of God, we find them to possess meanings that, in many cases, are far deeper and richer than was apparent before the coming of Christ and the sending of the Holy Spirit on the Church.

THE LORD. The Psalms use a generic word corresponding to our word "God," and so translated. This is used for the one true God, for the idols of the heathen, for great spiritual powers, and even for powerful or "god-like" men. In Hebrew this word is *El*, or *Elohim*, the latter a "plural of respect."

But God also revealed His Own personal Name to Moses: "I am Who am," which in transliterated Hebrew is Jahve or Yahweh. The Jews came to feel such overwhelming awe for this Name that they substituted different vowels between its consonants, thus making up a substitute word, Jehovah, to use instead of the Name itself, somewhat as many Christians feel it more reverent to say "Our Lord" rather than to use the Holy Name of

Jesus. When the first translation of Holy Scripture was made, into Greek (called the Septuagint because it was done by seventy scholars), the great Name was not translated, but only paraphrased by the Greek word Kyrios, translated later into Latin as Dominus and much later into English as the Lord. In the Psalms, then, with few exceptions, the Lord stands for Jahve, I am Who Am.

When Our Lord said "Before Abraham was made, I am," it was clear to His audience from the Aramaic language, which is much like Hebrew, that He was calling Himself by the very Name of God. And when the Apostles called Christ "the Lord," they meant not only that He is the master, leader, king, but that He is God, the God Who revealed Himself in the Old Testament. And so in the Liturgy as well. For example, it used to be thought that the first three repetitions of Kyrie eleison in the Mass and in litanies were addressed to God the Father, and the second group to God the Holy Spirit. But scholars now are sure that all three groups were designed to be addressed to God the Son, in the first and last groups as the Lord (God), in the second as Christ (the King, Priest, Prophet of mankind).

In saying the Psalms, then, "the Lord" is to be understood as the infinitely great He-Who-is, and as God-made-Man, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

GOD OUR ROCK, OUR FORTRESS, OUR SHIELD. The Psalms also use many metaphors in describing God and in praising Him, metaphors taken from the situation of a people constantly engaged in skirmishes and battles and private feuds in a mountainous, semi-arid country. The life of king David, in particular, provides a vivid commentary on both the natural and the warlike metaphors used in the Psalms. How often he was forced to seek refuge in caves in the hills; how often he needed all the weapons of defense and offense known to his time!

ALLELUIA (Hallelu-Ja). From God's Own Name is derived the great shout of praise: *Hallelu* meaning to praise, sing, shout for joy; and Ja being a shortened form of Jahve. The Church uses the Latinized form, *Alleluia*, as her great cry of praise for the Redemption. And St. Augustine says that *Alleluia* will be the

new song of the redeemed in heaven, and that, as Christians, we already have the privilege of rehearsing it here on earth.

THE NAME OF THE LORD. Ancient peoples felt that to know the real name of a person gave one a special relationship of intimacy with that person, and so of power, since the name expressed the real essence of a being. (We feel this in modern secularized society, also, as a matter of fact, and salesmen trade on it every day). To know the real name of a god, therefore, meant that he had given the people who knew it a special claim on his attention. So the Israelites were filled with wonder at God's goodness in revealing His Own Name to them, and saw it as a sign of His special favor. Often in the Psalms, instead of saying "the Lord," the Psalmist says, "the Name of the Lord," giving the added idea of "the Lord revealing Himself to His People."

GOD THE CREATOR. The Psalms bring all created nature into God's presence; they are filled with wonder at His wisdom and power, His providential ordering and care as displayed in created things. In the light of the New Testament and the Liturgy, we see in the wonders of God's making and ordering of the first creation, a picture and foreshadowing of His even more wonderful re-making of all things in Christ. This second creation began with the Resurrection of Christ and will be completed and appear in all its beauty after the resurrection of Christ's members and the Last Judgment, in the "new heaven and earth" of everlasting life. (See also Psalm 18 and its notes).

It need hardly be said, perhaps, that the Bible was not written to teach us natural science, and that the accounts of creation given in Genesis, and in several of the Psalms (e.g. 103), are not meant to be formulae, but rather vehicles for stating beautifully and memorably the truths God wishes us to realize about His creative action. So the general picture of the cosmos presumed in the Psalms is the one that was commonly held by people at the times when the Psalms were composed. And this picture is still valid for the purpose of showing man his place in the universe in relation to God and the holy angels above him, and to irrational creatures around and below him. In this picture, first we see God, high above all things; His court and His armies, the angels, in-

habit the highest heavens. Then come the "waters above the heavens" which, it was thought, God drew away from the earth as He was forming it, to make a kind of store-house from which to send down rain as earth needed it. Then came the firmament (sometimes translated as the stronghold of heaven), thought of as a solid dome across which the sun and moon and stars move in their courses. Then clouds and rain and snow. Then the birds of the air. Then the earth with its waters, out of which God raised the dry land; and the land itself, clothed with grass and trees, inhabited by birds and beasts and men. And the whole earth rests on the unfathomed "abyss."

THE WORD OF THE LORD. Many times in the Old Testament, we find special mention of the Word of the Lord as the means by which He creates and orders both things and events. His Word is also one of the synonyms for God's Law, the revelation of His will to His people. When St. John, then, wrote "In the beginning was the Word. . . ." he was showing Our Lord to be the fulfillment of one of the great themes of the Old Testament, to be Himself the incarnate message and effective means of action of God to mankind. And so, as St. Augustine says: "Since Christ is Himself the Word of God, each deed of the Word is a word to us."

THE LORD'S LOVE, KINDNESS, MERCY, GRACE. These are various renditions of one Hebrew word, hesed, describing the attitude of God toward weak and sinful mankind, and especially His love for His people, the love which is the motive of all His dealings with us. The Old Testament records the progressive self-revelation of this merciful love, in spite of the infidelities of the People, as the love of a father for his children, even as the love of a forgiving husband for an unfaithful wife. But only in the New Testament does God reveal the fullness of this unmerited, forgiving, healing, re-creating love, by sending His Son to suffer and die for us. So St. John says simply, "God is love." And only in the New Testament is it revealed that the love of God is Himself a divine Person, the Holy Spirit.

GOD'S CHOSEN SERVANTS. God's inscrutable wisdom executing the design of His love is the reason for His choices all through his-

tory: of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; of Joseph among His brothers; of Moses and Aaron to lead the People out of slavery; of the Chosen People themselves among the nations of the earth, to be God's special "inheritance," to be the People of the Messias. This loving wisdom, again, chose David from among the sheepfolds to rule the People, to be the great "type" and ancestor of the Messias. This same loving wisdom chose and sent the prophets through the ages, and, finally, the last of the prophets, St. John the Baptist. So our Lady was "chosen," and Christ Himself is called in the Old Testament "My chosen Servant." Again, Our Lord chose the Apostles one by one, and St. Paul later was called His "vessel of election," i.e. of special choice. Each of us, also, has been called by God to the grace of Baptism and to membership in His people. (See, for example, the Rite of Baptism.)

In both the Old and the New Testaments, it is clear that God chooses His servants to do some special work for Him. Where men turn His choice to their own self-interest, He rejects them as He did Saul. We should do well, therefore, to consider the mystery of God's choices in connection with our own vocation as Christians.

GOD'S ANOINTED. In the Old Testament, both the high-priest and the king were, by God's command, solemnly anointed with oil to consecrate them for God's special service and to give them the powers and authority of their offices. (In all near-eastern civilizations until modern times, olive-oil was used for everything for which we use all the various forms of mineral and other vegetable oils and butter; and so oil is the symbol of healing, strength, ease in operation, and hence of prosperity and joy). Therefore the One-Who-was-to-come finally to carry out God's plan for His People was to be *The Anointed*, in Hebrew, the *Messias*; in Greek, the *Christ*, for He would be the great prophet, priest and king, the heir of all the promises made to David. By means of this Messias, God would give His Own People justice and peace and prosperity and glory, and all the nations of the world would be brought to the knowledge and service of God.

When Our Lord was asked, "Are You the Christ?" the question meant "Are You this Promised One?" But only in the light

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of Christ Himself and the teaching of the Church was it revealed how perfectly Our Lord is the King, Priest and Sacrifice of mankind. As the priest sings in the Preface for the Feast of Christ the King, God the Father, by the Holy Spirit, anointed His Only Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, "with the oil of gladness, as Priest forever and King of all things; so that, offering Himself on the altar of the cross as a pure victim and peace-offering, He might accomplish the mysteries of man's redemption, and, having brought all things under His sway, He might deliver to the Divine Majesty a kingdom universal and eternal, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of justice, love and peace."

As Christians, we share in Our Lord's anointing by the Holy Spirit, in Baptism and in Confirmation. And our priests and bishops share in His anointing in a different and far more perfect way, in the Sacrament of Orders.

THE KING. King David himself, and every anointed king of God's People after him, was in his kingship a "type" and a fore-shadowing of Christ the King. When the Psalms, then, mention "the king" or "God's Anointed," we may understand the words as referring to Christ, and also to bishops and priests, and to all Christians in their degree.

GOD'S PROMISES. The first and greatest of God's Promises, containing in itself the realization of all the others, is the Promise of the One-to-come, the Savior, King, Priest of His people.

A GREAT NATION. God also promised Abraham to make his descendants a great nation; and this promise was renewed to the whole People on Mt. Sinai, and again to David. In the sense of a "rich and splendid material kingdom," this promise was fulfilled in the reign of king Solomon. After the disaster of the Captivity, it was hoped that the restoration promised by the prophets would mean the restoration of such a kingdom, although the prophecies now seem to us clearly to describe a kingdom of God beyond the potentialities of mere human prosperity. By the time of Our Lord, truly humble and faithful servants of God—Our Lady, Simeon, Zachary—looked for a spiritual renewal of their people. But the great majority—even the Apostles themselves before the coming of the Holy Spirit—still hoped for a kingdom very much

of this world, the establishment of God's People as a kind of super-Rome. Now we can understand that this promise is fulfilled in the Church, the kingdom of God which is in this world though not of it. But we, too, still look forward to the complete fulfillment of this promise in the City of God made perfect after the Last Day.

THE LAND. God also promised Abraham to give his descendants through Isaac, the land of Chanaan, or Palestine, as their inheritance. This promise was fulfilled in its literal sense by the conquering entrance of the People into the promised Land at the end of their forty years' wandering in the desert. Then each tribe received its due share, each family in each tribe its allotment. But the complete conquest of the Promised land and its surrounding territories, and the secure possession of them was contingent on obedience to God's Law. So the People held the land with greater or less completeness and security, according to their greater or less degree of obedience. Under King David and his son, Solomon, this promise also received its greatest material fulfillment. But in punishment of Solomon's sins and those of his successors, the kingdom was divided, invaded again and again, though with occasional spectacular deliverances in answer to humble prayer and a return to God's law. Finally, as the prophesied punishment of the infidelity and sinfulness of rulers and people, came the great disaster of the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem, the laying-waste of the country, and the captivity of a great number of the People in Babylon. After seventy years, a band of Jews were allowed to return once more to take possession, to rebuild the Holy City and the Temple.

In Our Lord's time, the Jews owned the Land, but only under Roman dominion, paying taxes to Rome, being subject to a Roman census and to some extent, to Roman law—a fact which was bitterly resented by the "nationalistic party," the Pharisees.

In the light of this Promise, it is easy to see why the Psalms so often speak of possession and inheritance of the land as so great a blessing. When Our Lord promised that "the meek shall possess the land," He was in fact repeating one of the ancient promises of God to His People, but showing at the same time, by the

whole context of this beatitude, that "the land" must be something other than possession of earthly property. We can now see, therefore, in the light of Christian teaching, that God's promise finally refers to the true home-country of God's children, the kingdom of heaven. Like the tenure of Palestine to the People of old, our possession by hope of this "land" is now contingent on our fidelity and obedience to God. Only in heaven, when the time of trial is over, will we enjoy it in perfect security and peace.

GOD'S REDEMPTION, SALVATION, SAVING HELP: HIS GREAT DEEDS AND

works. God also promised His people again and again His continued help in their needs and against their enemies; and the history of the Old Testament is a long series of fulfillments of this promise.

The great deliverance of the People from their slavery in Egypt was itself the beginning of their history as a nation. This deliverance was accomplished by the wonderful "deeds" or "works" of God described in the Book of Exodus and recalled in many of the Psalms, in particular the plagues God sent to the Egyptians; the safe crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites while their enemies were overwhelmed by its waters; His feeding of the People with manna from heaven all during their desert wanderings, and bringing water for them from the rocks; the miracles accompanying the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai; and, finally, the entrance into the Promised Land.

This is the great and typical deliverance or redemption, of which later ones are seen as both echoes and developments. The long thanksgiving song of David, Psalm 17, for instance, describes the help God had given him all during his life under the imagery of God's appearance to rend the Red Sea and so to deliver His People and overwhelm their enemies. And the later deliverance from the captivity in Babylon is seen as another Exodus, so that it is sometimes difficult to decide whether a particular Psalm refers to one or the other event.

But the wonderful deeds of God in the Old Testament by which He delivered His People from slavery and danger were preparations and, so to say, sketches of His great deliverance of the new People of God from the slavery of Satan, by the wonder-

ful deeds of Christ's Passion, Death and Resurrection, St. Luke tells us that, at the Transfiguration, Moses and Elias appeared and talked with Our Lord about His "exodus," that is, His death, which He was to accomplish in Jerusalem. And so the New Testament generally, the Liturgy and constant Christian tradition, all see the original Exodus and its accompanying wonders as being the pictures, or types, of our Redemption (see especially the Exultet of the Easter Vigil). As the Israelites, led by God's presence in the pillar of cloud and fire (St. Paul says they were "baptized" in Moses, in the cloud and in the sea), crossed the Red Sea and so were delivered from their enemies, to become God's People, given His law, fed by His special providence, sustained by His special help, finally crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land, so by Baptism we follow Christ in His journey, His "passing-over" through the sea of death, coming out to a new life as members of God's People, nourished by the Holy Eucharist, living by God's Law, until we finally "pass through" the waters of death to arrive in the promised land of heaven.

As we pray the Psalms, then, we understand the references to God's great works and deeds, to His marvels and wonders, His redemption and deliverance, as meaning not only those of the Old Testament, but also their fulfillment in the New—all the works by which Christ accomplished our salvation and those by which He enables us to share in it,—the Sacraments and all His graces.

ENEMIES. God's promise to help His people against their foes was, obviously, understood to refer to external enemies of the people. But it gradually became obvious that those among the People who were disobedient to God's Law and unjust in their dealings with one another were also enemies of the true good of the People. In the Psalms, therefore, "the wicked," "the unjust," those who "rebel against God" and "the enemy" are almost interchangeable terms, the more so when, after the establishment of a king who ruled with God's authority, those who opposed the king were seen to be opposing God Himself.

During the later centuries before, and during the Captivity, the prophets made it clearer and clearer that sin is the chief

enemy of God's people; external enemies are only God's instruments to punish His people's sins. Thus the way was prepared for the teaching of the New Testament that our battle is "not against flesh and blood, but against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness on high." Now, following Our Lord's example, we are to love our human enemies, while we hate wickedness in every form and fight against it in ourselves and in the world.

When we pray the Psalms, then, we understand "enemies" as meaning the Enemy of the human race and all his cohorts, the use he makes of human beings to try to thwart God's plan, the temptations we have to contend with, and the pride and self-will in each of us which war against our true welfare and the fulfillment of God's plan in the world. In this sense, we can say the "Cursing Psalms" with no distortion of the meaning. And, if many of the phrases seem too violent for us to use at all, even against the Evil one, let us remember that the Psalms were composed by people who commonly used violent and exaggerated metaphors, and who, also were accustomed to seeing violence openly displayed rather than mainly kept away from public view.

THE COMING OF THE LORD, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S KINGDOM. The Psalms implore God to come now to help and deliver us, to judge in favor of the innocent, to destroy the wicked. But many of them also look forward to a time when the Lord will come in a new way to judge and rule the earth, to destroy the wicked forever, to establish His kingdom for eternity, to reward the good with secure peace, prosperity and joy. By this Coming all nations will be enlightened and will join God's own people in serving and praising Him. In the perspectives of the Old Testament generally, this "coming" is connected with the destruction of enemies, the security, justice, salvation and peace of the rule of the Messiah. This coming is, then, to be the final and perfect fulfillment of all God's Promises to His people.

In the light of the Incarnation, we know that Christ the Lord has already come to our earth, that He has "visited His people and wrought their redemption." We know, too, that He is still coming in His Church to all mankind, and that we are to be the heralds and means of this continual Advent.\* And yet Our Lord is still "He Who is to come"; we look forward to His final coming in glory to establish His kingdom which shall have no end.

GOD'S FIDELITY (FAITHFULNESS) TO HIS PROMISES. It may seem strange to us at first that the Psalms so often praise God's faithfulness; we think that we should, perhaps, take it for granted. And yet what an incentive we should find to true hope and trust in God, what a defense against temptations to despair and doubt. in the thought of God's promises to His People in the Old Testament and the New-His promises to us-and His faithfulness to them. When the Psalmist is tempted to doubt, he considers God's great deeds in the past, and so draws courage and hope for the future. How much more we Christians, then, having all the lessons in trust of the Old Testament before our eyes, leading up to the great lesson of the Resurrection; having the pledge of our own victory and resurrection in the Holy Eucharist; having the examples of all the saints; and our own personal history of graces, -how great should be our hope and trust in God's fidelity to complete and perfect His work in us and for us, for the salvation of mankind and His own glory.

WAITING FOR THE LORD. The attitude of trustful and eager hope called in the Psalms "waiting" or "expecting" or "looking out for" the Lord, should, then, be a characteristic Christian attitude. We know that it is through Our Lord's Passion and Cross that we are to be brought to the glory of His Resurrection; we know that "by patience we share in the sufferings of Christ." So let us allow the Psalms to train us in this patient but eager expectancy, looking for the Lord to come to help us in our present difficulties, and looking for Him to come in His glory to make all things right and new. For the last word in the Bible is "Amen, come, Lord Jesus!"

THE COVENANT. God made His promises to Abraham in the form of a solemn covenant, confirmed by a sacrifice of animals offered by Abraham and accepted by God. The rite of circumcision was to be the "token of the covenant," the sign that Abra-

<sup>\*</sup> See the excellent book ADVENT, by Jean Danielou, S.J. (Sheed & Ward).

ham and each of his descendants accepted its terms. After the deliverance from Egypt, God made a covenant with the whole People on Mt. Sinai, through Moses' mouth: "If you hearken to My voice and keep my covenant, you shall be My special possession, dearer to Me than all other people ... You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation . . . " God gave them the Ten Commandments, His Law, the prescriptions for worship: He renewed His promises of the Land, and of His continued protection and guidance, if the People would obey Him. And the People accepted the Covenant: "We will do everything that the Lord has told us." Moses had sacrifice offered to God, and had the whole Book of the Covenant read again to the People, and they said again: "All that the Lord has said, we will heed and do." Then Moses took the blood of the sacrifice and sprinkled it on the altar and on the people, saying: "This is the blood of the Covenant which the Lord has made with you." Later, at the darkest hour of Old Testament history after the destruction of Jerusalem, Jeremias promised that God would make a new covenant with His people, a covenant which should be written in their hearts. This promise was fulfilled when, at the Last Supper, Our Lord made the New Covenant, in His Own Blood, the Covenant of love, ratified by His Sacrifice of the Cross. Each of us enters God's People, and becomes a beneficiary of this New Covenant by our Baptism; and is made able to take part as a member of the royal priesthood, the holy nation of the Church in the re-presentation of the Sacrifice of the New Covenant, the Mass.

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE: HIS DWELLING, HIS GLORY. God also gave His People His abiding presence in some special way that foreshadowed the mystery of the Incarnation. As they went out from Egypt, this Presence (also sometimes called, mysteriously, the Lord's Angel) went with them in the pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night. When God gave them the Law at Mt. Sinai, His majesty covered the whole mountain with a visible cloud of glory, a glory that so shone in Moses' own face after his days of receiving the Law from God that he had to veil himself in order not to terrify his own people.

God commanded Moses to have an Ark constructed, an oblong box about four feet long, two feet wide and two feet high, inlaid inside and out with purest gold. Within the Ark were laid the stone tablets on which God Himself had inscribed the Ten Commandments. On the cover of the Ark were figures of two Cherubim, also carved according to God's instructions, facing one another, with their heads downward and their wings outspread to form a kind of throne. This was called the Mercy-seat and was to be the site of God's Presence with His People. So, in the Psalms, God is sometimes called "He Who is enthroned upon the Cherubim." (We do not know what these figures looked like exactly; except that they were nothing like the silly cherubs of renaissance and contemporary pietistic art. They were probably more like the figures of Assyrian mythology, but in any case they were famous as having great beauty and impressiveness).

This Ark was to be carried at the head of the People as they marched through the wilderness; and, later, carried ahead of their armies into battle. But when the People were encamped, it was to be placed inside the Tabernacle, also constructed according to God's orders. This was literally a tent (the original meaning of the word "tabernacle") as were all the dwellings of the People during their desert wanderings. It had an inside room, the Holy of Holies, and a larger outside space, called the Sanctuary, containing the Altar of Incense, and the Table of "Shew-Bread" containing twelve loaves of bread, renewed each week, "for a memorial of oblation to the Lord," a sign of the twelve tribes offering themselves and their possessions to the Lord. In the Sanctuary also stood a golden Candlestick with seven lamps always burning.

Around the Tabernacle itself was its Court, in which stood the Altar of Holocausts and a great kind of basin or pool for purifications. On the Altar of Holocausts were offered the various prescribed sacrifices, faint foreshadowings of the One Sacrifice of Christ. These included: *Holocausts*, or whole-offerings, in which the victim was entirely consumed by the fire; these were offered in adoration of God. *Peace-offerings*, made to thank God for favors, and to ask for further graces. *Sin-offerings* and *trespass*-

offerings, offered in expiation of definite sins and also for purification from legal defilements in general. There were also unbloody sacrifices of the fruits of the earth, of oil and wine; and solemn sacrifices of incense.

God commanded Moses to consecrate Aaron, his brother, as the first high-priest by a solemn anointing with special perfumed oil; and this oil was also used to consecrate the altars and sacred vessels. The other priests and ministers were all to come from Aaron's tribe, the tribe of Levi, which was to have no land of its own, but to be supported by the other tribes and the free gifts of the people.

When everything was ready, as God had commanded, "the Cloud covered the Meeting Tent, and the glory of the Lord filled the Dwelling."

During the conquest of the Holy Land, the Tabernacle was set up in a little town in the north called Silo. During Saul's reign, the Ark, carried at the head of his armies, was taken by the enemy, in punishment for the sins of Saul and the people. So God was said to make "His strength captive." But so many misfortunes struck the Philistines for their presumption in taking the Ark, that they sent it back and it was installed in the house of a priestly family in Gabaa.

When king David was finally king over all Israel, and had conquered Jerusalem to be his capital city, he had the Tabernacle set up in a place prepared for it on Mt. Sion, one of the hills on which Jerusalem was built. With great solemnity and rejoicing, the Ark was brought from Gabaa and installed in the Tabernacle; and there the prescribed worship of God was carried on henceforth. Because of God's Presence in the Ark, Sion is called "God's dwelling," and Jerusalem (literally, city of peace) "God's holy city." In practice, Sion and Jerusalem are used as interchangeable terms. And the term Temple, or God's shrine, was used for the Tabernacle even before the Temple was built.

Solomon, David's son, at last built the Temple with great splendor, on the model of the Tabernacle. When it was finished, the Ark was placed therein and the Temple solemnly dedicated and "a cloud filled the house of the Lord. And the priests could

not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord."

This was the wonderful Temple that was laid waste at the time of the Captivity; and then the Ark, by God's command, was hidden in a cave in a mountain, and never found again. The temple rebuilt by Esdras and Nehemias, and the more splendid Temple, which stood in Our Lord's days, never had the visible sign of God's presence, the cloud and the Glory.

When St. John tells us that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we saw His Glory ...," he is using terms consecrated to the traditional presence of God among His People-the Dwelling, and the Glory that radiates from it. Moreover, the Greek word that he uses for "dwelling" literally means "tenting" or "tabernacling"; and is very similar in sound to the Hebrew word "shekinah" used for this Presence of God among His Own, Our Lord Himself, when He said that He could rebuild the Temple in three days, "spoke of the temple of His body" as St. John tells us. And, at the Transfiguration, the cloud and the Glory both visibly appeared once more surrounding Him. So all the foreshadowings of the Old Testament as to God's dwelling with us are fulfilled in Our Lord Himself, Emmanuel, God-with-us, and in the Church, His Body and His Bride. So the Liturgy refers the praises of God's dwelling (in Jerusalem, Sion, in the Temple, and over the Ark) to the Church; and also to our Lady as the Mother of Christ and the embodiment, the concretion of the Church already brought to its final glorious perfection. And, as we praise God's presence in His holy City, we also look forward to the blessed presence of God in heaven, in the new Jerusalem, the city of the just. There we ourselves will share in the glory of the Risen Christ; "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

THE LAW. God's Law, described as a path, a way,—or as we say today, using the same metaphor, a "way of life,"—included all the prescriptions as to worship, moral conduct, personal and social justice, even of hygiene, as God had given them to Moses on Mt. Sinai: all summed up in the Ten Commandments, and in the two Great Commandments of love of God and neighbor. The

synonyms used for the Law—decrees, edicts, judgments, promises, etc.,—all indicate various aspects of the Law, including its sanctions and its concrete applications. Our Lord did not come to destroy this Law but to "fulfill" it, that is, to complete and perfect its lines of development, making it, as St. Paul says, a law of love and not of bondage, and transcending anything that could have been commanded before the Incarnation by His "new commandment" that we love one another as He has loved us. The Psalms show great gratitude to God for giving His People the Old Law; as we use these prayers, then, how great should be our gratitude for the new law of Christ's love, with all that it implies of trustful obedience to the Father's Will.

THE JUST, FAITHFUL, HOLY in the Psalms are those who fulfil God's Law. "Just" here goes beyond our use of the word as giving God and man their due, and means also all that we mean by true, and good,—sharing in God's own justice, justness, and goodness. The poor, needy, afflicted, are seen in the Psalms as special objects of God's care and love, and the particular beneficiaries of the justice and salvation to be brought by the Messias. Here, again, we find the foreshadowing of Christ's teaching and example.

THE ASSEMBLY. Frequent mention in the Psalms is made of "the gathering," "the great throng," the "assembly," or as we would say, the congregation or church. The immediate reference was to a great crowd of worshippers gathered in the Temple for a feast-day (every Israelite was to come, whenever possible, up to Jerusalem for the great feasts). So the Psalmist often promises God to praise Him in the "assembly," that is, to thank Him publicly in the presence of His People. These "assemblies" for God's worship were foreshadowings of the great gathering of the Church, both here on earth, and, finally, after the Last Judgment, when all the "just" will be gathered together forever in God's presence, to sing with joy to Him forever.

THE NATIONS. In the Psalms, the term "nations," or "heathen," or "peoples" or "tribes" means everyone not of the Chosen People, not descended from the twelve sons of Jacob. Some of these "nations" were great powers like Egypt, Assyria, Persia.

But in the early Psalms, the term usually refere to the various inhabitants of the land of Palestine before it was conquered by the People, and those immediately surrounding it. The thought in the Psalms is that while, here and now, the "nations" are hostile to God and to His People, ultimately they will be brought to know, love and serve Him. So, as we pray the Psalms, we can use this term for all those who do not yet know Our Lord, who have not yet heard and accepted Him as their Savior.

SHEOL, THE PIT, THE WORLD BELOW. The idea of the hereafter in the Old Testament seems to have been a good deal like that of the Greeks,—a shadowy, unsatisfactory kind of existence, in a world of shades, cut off from the "light of the living." Sheol is described as the land of forgetfulness, where no one remembers God or praises Him. Long earthly life was, then, greatly to be desired; and God is urged to grant it in self-interest, so to speak, so that He will not be deprived of the Psalmist's praises. But certain passages in the Psalms seem to indicate prophetic glimpses of the happiness that Christ has now won for us by His Passion and Death, by going down Himself into the lower world of death and rising again to the glorious and immortal life which He shares with His faithful.

Now, for the new People of God, the true death, the death to be feared, is the death of sin by which the Enemy takes men down to the true land of darkness, hell. When we pray the Psalms, then, it is this death to which we refer, from this "sheol" that we pray God to deliver us.

SUMMARY. The best summary of the chief themes of the Old Testament, and their opening-out into fulfillment in the New is to be found in the three Psalms, or "Canticles" of the New Testament: The Benedictus, sung by the father of St. John the Baptist in thanksgiving for the vocation of his child; the Magnificat, our Lady's song of praise for the Incarnation; and Simeon's song of thanksgiving for having seen Christ, the Nunc Dimittis.

#### **MAGNIFICAT**

My soul proclaims the Lord's greatness, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior:

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For He has looked upon the lowliness of His handmaid, and behold, now all generations shall call me blessed! Great things has He done for me, He the Strong, His name is holy:

His mercy extends from generation to generation, to those who fear Him:

He has shown the power of His arm and scattered the proud of heart:

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the lowly:

He has filled with His bounty those who hunger, and sent the rich away empty:

He has raised up Israel His servant, remembering His mercy—

As He promised to our fathers toward Abraham and his race forever.

#### BENEDICTUS

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, for He has visited His people and redeemed them, And He has raised up for us a mighty Savior <sup>1</sup> in the house of David, His servant,

As He promised through the mouth of His holy ones, His prophets in past ages,

That He would deliver us from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us,

To be merciful to our fathers, remembering His holy covenant,

And the oath He swore to Abraham our father,—that He would grant us,

Freed from the hand of our enemies, fearlessly to serve Him,

In holiness and justice before Him all our days.

And you, child, shall be called the Prophet of the Highest, you shall go before the Lord, to prepare His ways,

<sup>1</sup> Lit. "a horn of salvation," see note on Psalm 74, p. 144.

XXXVI

To give His people knowledge of salvation,
forgiveness of their sins;
This the work of the depths of our God's mercy,
the mercy with which He will visit us,
He the Dayspring from on high,
To shine on those who sit in darkness and death's shadow,
to guide our feet into the way of peace.

#### NUNC DIMITTIS

Now, Lord, You let Your servant go in peace, according to Your word:

For my eyes have seen the salvation that You have prepared in the sight of all peoples,—

The light of revelation for the nations, and the glory of Your people, Israel.

MARY PERKINS RYAN

## **E**FIRST BOOK OF PSALMS

### THE TWO WAYS

How blessed the man
who does not walk the way counselled by the wicked,
Nor linger on the path of sinners,
nor sit in the company of the scornful,
But delights in the law of the Lord,
meditates on His law day and night.

He is like a tree
planted near running water,
That brings forth its fruit in due season,
its leaves never wither; whatever he does, prospers.

Not so the wicked, not so!
they are like chaff driven away by the wind.
Therefore the wicked shall not stand
in the time of judgment,
nor sinners in the assembly of the just:
For the Lord watches over the way of the just,
but the way of the wicked vanishes.

Psalm 1 forms a kind of preface to the whole Psalter. The good man will flourish, for he lives by God's law as a tree, growing by a river, draws its life from it. (In arid lands like much of Palestine, it is only by streams that trees usually flourish). But the wicked will be scattered and lost, blown away like chaff (in the age-old method of winnowing grain by tossing it into the air against the wind). The Just Man is, of course, Our Lord Himself, and we are just in so far as we are one with Him in His delight in His Father's Law and His perfect obedience to His Father's Will. (This Psalm is used in the Mass of Ash Wednesday).

### CHRIST, RULER OF NATIONS

Why do the nations rage,
the peoples mutter vain threats,
The kings of the earth rise up,
the rulers plot together
Against the Lord
and against His Christ:
"Let us break their bonds asunder,
let us cast away their chains"?

He laughs Who is throned in heaven, the Lord laughs them to scorn: Then He shall speak to them in His wrath, dismay them in His anger: "I have established My king on Sion, My holy mountain."

"I will proclaim the decree of the Lord, to me the Lord declared: 'You are My son, this day have I begotten you, Ask Me, I will give you all the nations

for your heritage,

and the ends of the earth for your own:
With a rod of iron you shall rule them,
like pots of clay you shall shatter them.'"

Psalm 2 is written directly about the Messias (see p. xxiii), prophesying His universal rule. In the first stanza, the Psalmist quotes the words of God's enemies; in the second, he gives God's words; in the third, he gives the words of the Messias Himself as He quotes His Father's words to Him. We pray this Psalm in praise of Christ the King. (Quoted in Acts 4:25 ff; 13:33; Heb. 1:5; Apoc. 2:27; 12:5; 19:15. Used in the First Christmas Mass, Feast of Christ the King).

And now, O kings, attend,
be warned, all you who rule the earth:
Serve the Lord with fear,
rejoice before Him; trembling, kiss His feet,
Lest He grow angry, and you perish by the wayside
when suddenly His anger blazes out.
Happy are all
who take refuge in Him!

#### PRAYER ON WAKING

How many, O Lord, are my enemies,
what hordes attack me,
How many say of my soul:
"No salvation in his God for him!"
Yet You, O Lord, are my shield,
my glory, He Who lifts up my head.
With a loud voice I call out to the Lord,
and He answers me from His holy mountain:
I lie down and I sleep,
now I wake again, for the Lord upholds me.
I fear not men in their thousands,
all around me, all against me.

Arise, O Lord,
save me, O my God!
For You break the jaws of all my foes,
You shatter the teeth of sinners.
Salvation is the Lord's,
on Your people be Your blessing!

Psalm 3. "A Psalm of David when he fled from his son Absalom" (see 2 Sam. 15-18). As David, in flight from his enemies, laid down to rest secure in God's protection, and awoke safely in the morning, to do battle and finally win the victory, so Christ as He was dying on the Cross commended His soul to His Father's care, and rose again on the third day in the glorious triumph of His Resurrection. This is traditionally a Christian morning prayer (used every day to open Monastic matins) since when we go to sleep each night we rehearse our death in Christ, and each morning when we awake, we anticipate by hope the joy of sharing in His Resurrection.

#### NIGHT PRAYER

When I call, You hear me, O God of my justice, in distress, You set me free:
Have pity on me,
and hear my prayer.

How long, great men, will you be hard of heart, why love vain schemes, why follow falsehood? Know that the Lord wonderfully favors His faithful one, the Lord will hear me when I cry.

Tremble and sin no more, think deep in your hearts, on your beds lying still. Offer the sacrifices of justice, put your hope in the Lord.

Many men say, "Who will give us happiness?"
may the light of Your face, Lord, shine upon us!
To my heart You have given gladness,
more than when grain and wine abound:
I lie down and at once I sleep in peace,
for You, O Lord, You alone make me rest secure.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "The heart" in Hebrew is the organ of affection but also and more frequently of thought, so the "hard of heart" are those who are with difficulty moved to accept the truth (mind), follow the good (will).

Psalm 4. "For the choirmaster. With stringed instruments. A Psalm. Of David." The Psalmist implores God's help; addresses his enemies who will not follow God's plan; and sings of his own happiness in God, greater than that given by any material prosperity, and his security in God's care. This is traditionally an evening prayer (Sunday and Monastic Compline) by which we unite our sleep with Christ's death on the Cross, our trust in the Father with His perfect trust. (Quoted in Eph. 4:26).

## MORNING PRAYER OF A JUST MAN SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES

Listen, O Lord, to my words,
be attentive to my sighs,
Hear my cry for Your help,
my king and my God!
To You do I pray, Lord, at dawn You hear my voice,
at dawn I bring You my offering, and I wait.

For You are not a God Who takes pleasure in evil, no wicked man dwells with You, no boastful men can stand in Your sight:

You hate all who do evil,

you destroy all who speak falsehood, men of violence and of guile the Lord abhors.

But I, through Your abundant grace,
come into Your house,
adoring, I turn to Your holy temple,
in awe of You, O Lord:

Lead me in Your goodness, because of my enemies, make Your way straight before me.

For no sincerity is in their mouth, their heart teams with deceits:
Their throat is an open tomb, they flatter sweetly with their tongue.
Chastise them, O God, let them fall by their own plots:

Psalm 5. "For the choirmaster. With flutes. A Psalm. Of David." We can pray this Psalm to ask for God's help against the temptations of the coming day in which we will encounter our enemies, the world, the flesh and the devil. (Quoted in Rom. 3:13).

For all their sins, cast them out,—against You do they rebel.

But all who take refuge in You will be glad,
they will rejoice forever, for You will protect them:
And those who love Your name
will exult in You with joy:
For You, O Lord, bless the good man,
Your kindness surrounds him like a shield.

### PRAYER OF ONE CHASTISED BY GOD

Do not rebuke me, Lord, in Your anger,
do not punish me in Your wrath:
Have pity on me, Lord, I am so weakened,
heal me, O Lord, my very bones are in pain,
And my soul in great pain,—
but You, O Lord,—how long?

Return, Lord, free my soul, save me for the sake of Your mercy: For none remembers You among the dead; who gives thanks to You in sheol? 1

I am weary with sighing,
every night my bed is drenched with my weeping,
my couch bedewed with my tears:
My eyes are dim with sorrow,

I have grown old among my foes.

Depart from me, all you who do evil,
for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping,
The Lord has listened to my pleading,
the Lord has granted my prayer.
All my enemies are put to shame in utter dismay,
they fall back, all at once confounded.

Psalm 6. "For the choirmaster. With stringed instruments. On the octave. A Psalm. Of David." In great distress from illness and persecution, a sinner prays; God hears him and delivers him. (See also p. xxxv. We can pray this Psalm for ourselves and for one another that God will heal us from the sickness of sin and deliver us from our real enemies, the forces of the Evil one. This is the First Penitential Psalm. (Quoted in Matt. 7:23; Luke 13:27). (Used in the Visiting of the Sick).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See p. xxxv.

## APPEAL TO GOD, THE JUST JUDGE

O Lord, my God, I take refuge in You, save me, deliver me from all who pursue me, Lest I be torn like the prey of a lion, rent apart, with no one to save me.

O Lord, my God, if I have done this thing, if guilt be on my hands,

If I have repaid with evil him who was my friend,—
I who spared those who attacked me without cause,—

May the enemy pursue me and overtake me, may he trample my life to the ground,

throw my honor in the dust.

Rise up, O Lord, in Your anger,
rise against the fury of my foes,
Rise up on my behalf
for the judgment You have ordained.
Let the assembly of the peoples surround

Let the assembly of the peoples surround You, be enthroned above them on high,

the Lord judging the nations.

Give judgment for me, O Lord, that I am in the right and that innocence is mine:

Let the malice of sinners be ended, uphold good men, O Searcher of hearts and souls, God the Just!

God is a shield before me, saving the right of heart:

Psalm 7. "A lament of David, which he sang to the Lord because of Chus the Benjamite." This may refer to one of Saul's servants who made false accusations about David to Saul. Christ and His Church are being calumniated today in many parts of the world. We can pray this Psalm, then, that God's truth may shine out and that He may hasten the complete victory of His justice.

God is a just judge,
giving sentence day after day:

If they do not change, He will whet His sword,
He will bend His bow and aim it straight,

Make ready against them His deadly weapons,
set His arrows aflame.

See, he who conceives sin, who is pregnant

with mischief,

he brings forth deception:
He dug a pit, he dug it deep,
now he falls in the pit he made;
His tricks recoil on his own head,
on his own crown falls his fury.

I give thanks to the Lord for His justice,
I sing in praise to the name of the Lord Most High.

### HYMN TO GOD OUR CREATOR

O Lord, our Lord,
how wonderful is Your Name in all the earth,
You Who have set Your majesty
high above the heavens!
Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings
You have provided praise,
Against Your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.

When I look at Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars that You have set up,—

What is man that You remember him, the son of man that You care for him?

Little less than the angels have You made him, You have crowned him with glory and honor, You have given him rule over Your handiwork, setting all things under his feet:

All the sheep and the oxen, all the beasts of the field,

The birds of the air and the fish of the sea, all that swims through the sea-ways.

O Lord, our Lord, how wonderful is Your Name in all the earth!

Psalm 8. "For the choirmaster. According to Torcularia. A Psalm. Of David." To give praise to God, the Psalmist praises the grandeur of creation and of man, made by God. St. Paul refers the 6th verse, "little less than the angels," (Heb. 2:6 ff.) and the 7th (1 Cor. 15:27) to our Lord as Man, King of all creation. Our Lord Himself quoted the second verse at His Palm Sunday entrance into Jerusalem. (Matt. 21:16). (Used in Masses of the Holy Name, the Blessed Trinity, Vigils of Apostles, Martyr Bishops and Martyrs, Baptism of Adults).

#### THANKSGIVING FOR VICTORY

I will give You thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart, proclaim all Your wonderful works,
I will be glad and rejoice in You,
I will sing to Your name, O Most High!
For my enemies are turned back,
they have fallen and perished before Your face.

You have upheld my right and my cause, seated on Your throne, judging rightly:
You have rebuked the proud, destroyed the wicked, blotted out their names forever:
The foe is vanished, his memory dead, you have uprooted his cities, they are ruined forever.

But the Lord sits forever enthroned,

He has set up His throne for judgment:

He judges the world aright,

He governs the people with justice.

The Lord is a fort for the oppressed,

a fort in times of trouble:

In You they trust who know Your name,

for You forsake not, O Lord, those who seek You.

Psalm 9. "For the choirmaster. According to muth labben. A Psalm. Of David." In the first part, the Psalmist thanks God for a victory over external enemies, (during its whole history, with rare exceptions, the People of God were at war either with the small tribes immediately surrounding them, or the great nations further off); and asks that God may once again judge and punish his foes. In the second part, the Psalmist vividly describes the internal enemies of the nation, the oppressors of the poor. We may pray this Psalm for the peace of the Church and the victory of God's justice in every sphere of human life.

Sing praise to the Lord Who dwells in Sion, proclaim His deeds among the nations:
For the Avenger of blood has remembered,
He has not forgotten the cry of the poor.

"Have mercy, O Lord, see how those

who hate You afflict me,

lift me up from the gates of death:

That I may declare all Your praises in the gates of the daughter of Sion,<sup>1</sup> that I may rejoice in Your salvation."

The proud have fallen into the pit they dug, their own feet are caught in the snare they set: The Lord has shown Himself, He has given judgment, the sinner is ensuared in the work of his hands!

May the wicked withdraw to sheol,<sup>2</sup>
all the nations forgetful of God.

The needy shall not always be forgotten,
the poor man's hope shall not forever die.

Rise up, O Lord, let not man prevail,
let the proud be judged before Your face:

O Lord, smite them with terror,
let the nations learn they are but men!

<sup>1</sup> Or 'daughter Sion.' A Hebrew idiom meaning the city of Sion.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> See p. xxxv.

### PRAYER FOR THE POOR AND OPPRESSED

Why, O Lord, do You stand afar, why hide in time of trouble?
Proudly the wicked oppress the poor,

trap them in the plots they have devised:

For the sinner glories in his greed,

the man of avarice blasphemes, he scorns the Lord.

The godless man says in the conceit of his heart,

"He will not avenge it";

"There is no God," such is his thought.

His ways at all times are secure,

Your judgments far from his mind,

he sneers at all his foes:

He says in his heart, "Nothing shall shake me, never will I suffer misfortune."

Curses fill his mouth, deceit and guile, mischief and evil are under his tongue

He lurks in ambush near the villages, in secret places he slays the harmless:

He spies on the poor,

he hides in ambush like a lion in his lair:

He lies in wait to catch the poor man, to catch him, ensnaring him in his net.

He stoops, he crouches, he springs, the unfortunate fall into his power:

In his heart he says, "God forgets, He hides His face, He never sees!"

Rise up, O Lord, lift high Your hand, do not forget the poor:

Why should the wicked man scorn God, saying in his heart, "He will not avenge it!"

Indeed You do see, for You look on labor and pain, taking them up in Your hands.

To You the poor man entrusts himself, You are the help of the fatherless: Break the arm of the sinful man and the malicious, search out his crimes, may they have an end.

The Lord is king for ever and ever,
the proud will be lost, far away from His land.
You hear, O Lord, the desire of the poor,
You strengthen their heart, You give heed,
So that you may defend the fatherless

and the oppressed, so that man, mere man of earth,

may terrify no more.

### PRAYER OF UNSHAKEABLE TRUST IN GOD

In the Lord I take refuge:

how can you say to my soul,

"Wing your way like a bird to the mountain, For see, sinners bend the bow, fit arrow to string

to shoot in darkness at those whose hearts are right. When the very foundations are overthrown,

what can a just man do?"

The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord—His throne is in the heavens:

His eyes behold,

His gaze is fixed upon the sons of men:

The Lord gazes on the good and the wicked, His heart hates those who love violence:

Fiery coals and brimstone will He rain upon the wicked,

a burning wind will be their portion:

For the Lord is just and loves justness, the upright shall see His face.

Psalm 10. "For the choirmaster. Of David." In the present order, evil often seems to have won such a complete victory that the only course for a good man is flight. But the Christian need never flee from the struggle with the forces of evil, for Christ has already overcome the world and is coming to judge it on the Last Day, and His members may share in His strength and His victory.

## PRAYER IN EVIL TIMES

Help us, O Lord, for no man keeps faith,
loyalty has vanished from among mankind:
Everyone lies, each man to his neighbor,
he speaks with smooth lips and a double heart.
May the Lord cut off all the lips that flatter,
the tongues that boast:
"By our tongues," they say, "we are heroes,

"By our tongues," they say, "we are heroes, our lips are our own, who is our master?"

"Because the poor are oppressed and the needy are sighing, Now I rise," says the Lord, "I will give salvation to him who longs for it."

The Lord's words are true words, like silver tried in the furnace, freed of dross, seven times purified.

You, O Lord, You will keep us,
You will save us for ever from this generation:
The wicked walk all around us,
while the vilest of men rise to power.

Psalm 11. "For the choirmaster. On the octave. A Psalm. Of David." The world is full of false propaganda and of oppression, but God has promised His help to those who trust in Him, and His promise is Truth itself.

# TRUSTFUL CRY TO GOD IN THE MIDST OF TROUBLES

How long, O Lord, will You wholly forget me?
how long will You hide Your face?
How long will I tell over the sorrows in my soul,
the grief in my heart day by day?
How long will my enemy triumph over me?
look on me, hear me, O Lord, my God!

Give light to my eyes lest I sleep in death,
lest my enemy say, "I have conquered him!"
Lest my foes rejoice in my downfall
when I trusted in Your mercy.
My heart will rejoice in Your saving help,
I will sing to the Lord Who gives me good things.

Psalm 12. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." A wonderful prayer against long-lasting trials, and temptations to despair of God's merciful help.

# THE CORRUPTION OF ALL MEN AND ITS PUNISHMENT

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God":

Such men are corrupt, their deeds are horrible, there is not one who does good.

The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of men to find one man who is wise, one who seeks God:

All have gone astray together, all have become depraved, there is not one who does good; no, not one.

Will they never learn, these men who do evil, who devour my people as they eat bread? They do not invoke the Lord,

but they will tremble with fear, for God is with the generation of the just.

You would confound the plan of the poor man, but the Lord is his refuge.

O that the salvation of Israel would come forth from Sion!

When the Lord restores the well-being of His people, then shall Jacob exult, then shall Israel be glad!

Psalm 13. "For the choirmaster. Of David." A trustful prayer for the triumph of God's justice in spite of the corruption of mankind. In the last stanza, we pray for the completion and perfection of the City of God, the Church. This Psalm is almost identical with Psalm 52. (Quoted in Rom. 3:10-12).

## WHO IS WORTHY TO APPEAR IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE?

O Lord, who shall dwell in Your tent, who shall live on Your holy mountain?

He who walks without sin,
who does what is right:
Who thinks the truth in his heart,
who speaks no slander with his tongue:
Who does no evil to his fellow-man,
who casts no slur upon his neighbor:
Who scorns the shameless
and honors those who fear the Lord:
Who keeps his word though it be to his loss,
lends not his money at usury,
takes no bribes against the innocent.

He who does these things shall be untroubled forever.

Psalm 14. "A Psalm. Of David." We can make this Psalm a prayer for growth in the virtues of honesty, justice and charity in all our dealings with others. It is also a wonderful lesson in the fact that ordinary daily life carried out with honesty and charity makes us worthy of the Lord's companionship in heaven.

### GOD. THE SOURCE OF LIFE

Keep me safe, O God,
for in You I take refuge:
I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord,
nothing good have I without You."

How wonderful has He made all my love for the holy ones who are in His land! Those men but increase their sorrows, who run after alien gods! I will not pour out their blood-offerings, nor take their names on my lips.

The Lord is my share of the inheritance and my cup, it is You that keep safe my lot:

The lines of my land fall in pleasant places, how fair to me is my heritage!

I will bless the Lord Who gives me counsel, so that even by night my heart teaches me: I keep the Lord always in my sight, with Him at my right hand, I shall not be troubled.

Glad, then, is my heart and my soul rejoices, and even my flesh rests secure:

Psalm 15. "A miktam. Of David." The Psalmist sings of his love of God who is his greatest good, his riches, his inheritance, his teacher and guardian, source of life and joy. St. Peter (Acts 2:25-32) and St. Paul (Acts 13:35-37) refer to the next to last verse as fulfilled in Our Lord's resurrection. We are to pray this Psalm, then, as sharing by Baptism in Christ's love and delight in His Father, and as looking forward by hope to sharing in His resurrection. (Used in Rite of Tonsure; Visiting of the Sick).

For You will not leave my soul in sheol,
nor suffer Your faithful one to see corruption:
You will show me the way of life,
fullness of joys in Your presence,
delights at Your right hand forever.

# AN INNOCENT MAN IMPLORES GOD'S HELP AGAINST POWERFUL ENEMIES

Hear a just cause, O God, heed my appeal, listen to my prayer from lips without guile! Let my sentence come forth from Your presence, Your eyes see what is right.

Though You search my heart, though You come by night, though You try me by fire, You will find in me no evil:

My mouth has not committed faults as is man's wont, according to the words of Your lips

have I kept the ways of the law:

My step has held fast to Your paths, my feet have not faltered.

I will call upon You, O God, for You will answer me,
O bend down to hear me, listen to my words,
Show the wonders of Your mercy,
Savior of those who fly to Your right hand
from their enemies!

Guard me as the apple of Your eye, hide me in the shadow of Your wings, From the wicked who oppress me, from the foes who bear down upon me.

Furiously my enemies surround me, they close up their gross heart,

their mouths speak with pride:

They spy on me, they surround me, eyes watchful to strike me to the ground.

Psalm 16. "A prayer. Of David." Christ is the only One in whom God "finds no evil" of any kind, and today He is being unjustly accused and persecuted in His Church. Let us pray this Psalm, then, for His oppressed and slandered members all over the world.

Like a lion panting for his prey, like a lion-cub crouching in his lair.

Rise up, O Lord,
face him and cast him down:

By Your sword, deliver me from the sinner,
by Your hand, O Lord, from men,—

From men whose portion is this life,
whose belly You fill with Your riches,

Whose sons have more than plenty,
and leave what remains to their children.

But I in rightness shall see Your face,
be content, when I awake in Your presence.

# THANKSGIVING OF KING DAVID FOR SALVATION AND VICTORY

I love You, O Lord, my strength,
O Lord, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer:
My God, the crag that I fly to,
my shield, the horn that saves me, my stronghold:
I cry out, "Praised be the Lord!"
and I am saved from my foes.

The waves of death flowed all round me, the floods of destruction overwhelmed me, The ropes of sheol were bound round me, the snares of death entangled me:

In my anguish I called on the Lord, I cried out to my God:

And He heard my voice from His temple. my cry came to His ears.

Then the earth quaked and trembled, the foundations of the mountains swayed, they were shaken, for He was enraged.

Psalm 17. "For the choirmaster. Of David, the servant of the Lord, who spoke the words of this song to the Lord, when the Lord freed him from the power of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. Then he said . . " (see 2 Sam. 22.) David's vivid and inclusive thanksgiving for all God's help during his long life first takes the imagery of the Exodus (see p. xxvi) when God divided the Red Sea to let His people escape and then overwhelmed their foes. We pray this Psalm to celebrate the age-long battles of Christ and His Church against the forces of evil, the saving grace of God Who never allows the gates of hell to prevail, and the final victory which is anticipated in the Resurrection and will be fully achieved in all creation at the end of the world. (Quoted in Rom. 15:9; used in Masses of Septuagesima, Ember Tuesday, Rogation days, Pentecost Wed.).

Smoke went up from His nostrils, consuming fire from His mouth, kindling coals to flame.

Then He bent the heavens and came down. a dark cloud under His feet:

He was carried on a cherub, and He flew, He was borne on the wings of the wind:

He put on darkness as a cloak, black mist and heavy rain-clouds as a covering:

At the lightning in His presence, coals burst out into flame.

Then the Lord thundered from heaven, the Most High sent forth His voice:

He shot His arrows and scattered them, His incessant lightning routed them.

Now the bed of the ocean appeared, the foundations of the world were laid bare,

At the rebuke of the Lord.

at the blast of the breath of His wrath.

He reached out from on high, He grasped me, He drew me out of the deep waters,

From my mighty foe He delivered me, from those too strong for me, who hated me.

They attacked me on the day of my woe, but the Lord came to guard me:

He led me out into an open space, He saved me, because He loves me.

As I am just, so the Lord rewarded me, as I was clean of hand, so He repaid: For I have held to the ways of the Lord, I have not turned away from my God by sin:

I have kept all His commands before my eyes,

I have not disdained His precepts:

I have been whole-hearted in His sight, I have kept myself from sin.

And the Lord repaid me for my rightness, as He saw me, clean of hand.

With the faithful, You are faithful, with the upright, You are upright:

With the sincere, You are sincere, but with the crooked, You are guileful:

For You will save the humble, and the haughty-eyed You will bring low.

For You, Lord, You give light to my lamp, You, my God, You brighten my darkness:

For with You I charge the enemies' troops, through my God I leap over a wall.

God's way is perfect, fire-tested the Lord's promise, He Himself is a shield for all

who take refuge in Him.

For who is God, save the Lord?
who is a rock, save our God,
The God Who girds me with strength,
Who makes my way straight before me,
Who makes my foot swift like the deer's,
Who sets me aloft on the heights,
Who trains my hands for war,
my arms to bend the bow of bronze.

You have given me the shield of Your saving help, Your right hand upholds me,

Your care has made me great:

You have made a wide path for my steps, lest my feet should falter.

I pursued my foes and I caught them, I did not turn until I crushed them:

I smote them till they could not rise, they fell beneath my feet. For You have girded me with strength for battle, You subdued those who resisted me:

You have made my enemies turn and flee, You have destroyed those who hated me.

They called out-there was no one to save them,

to the Lord,—but He did not answer:

I scattered them like wind-blown dust, I trampled them like mire in the streets.

You have rescued me from the quarrels of the people, You have made me the head of nations:

Peoples I never knew of now serve me, they hear me and they obey:

Foreigners flatter me,

foreigners grow pale

and come trembling out of their strongholds.

Live the Lord! Blessed be my Rock! high praise to God my Savior!-

The God Who granted me vengeance, Who subjected to me whole peoples.

You have saved me from my foes,

made me triumph over my adversaries, rescued me from the man of violence.

Then I will praise You, O Lord, among the nations, I will sing a hymn of praise to Your name,

To You who give great victories to Your king, having mercy on Your anointed,

on David and his seed forever.

# PRAISE OF THE CREATOR OF VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE LIGHT

The heavens are telling God's glory,
the sky proclaiming the work of His hands:
Day speaks the word unto day,
night makes it known unto night:
It is not speech, not human words,
not a voice that cries aloud,
But their sound goes out over all the world,
their tidings to the ends of the earth.

There He sets up a tent for the sun,
who comes out of his chamber like a bridegroom,
exulting like a champion to run his course:
He enters at one end of the heavens,
to the further end is his circuit,
nothing can hide from his heat.

The Law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul: The decree of the Lord is to be trusted, making wise the simple:

Psalm 18. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." This hymn praises God as the Creator of nature with its law, of which the movements of the stars and the rising and setting of the sun are the most evident examples,—and of the Law, also made by God, by which human nature also can become fully pleasing to its Creator. St. Paul (Rom. 10:18) applies to the Apostles the last verse of the first stanza; and the Fathers apply the second stanza to Our Lord, the Sun of Justice, coming out of the Virgin's womb to 'run his course' of accomplishing our redemption and giving us the new law of love. (Used in many Advent Masses; 3rd Sunday of Lent; Feasts of Apostles).

The precepts of the Lord are right, delighting the heart:
The command of the Lord is bright, enlightening the eye:
The word of the Lord is pure, enduring forever:

The judgments of the Lord are true,
all of them just,
The commandments of the Lord
are more alluring than gold,
than pure gold heaped up:
His words are sweeter than honey,

Your servant is led by them,
he is enriched by keeping them:—
Yet what man knows his failings?
from my hidden faults, cleanse me,
And keep Your servant from rebellion,
let it not rule over me:
Then shall I be whole,
and free of grievous sin.

honey dripping from the honey-comb.

Deign to accept the words of my mouth, the thought of my heart In Your sight always, O Lord, my rock and my Redeemer!

# A PRAYER FOR THE KING BEFORE BATTLE

May the Lord hear you in the day of trial, may the name of Jacob's God protect you:
From His holy place may He send you aid, and from Sion may He uphold you:
May He remember all your offerings, take pleasure in your holocaust:
May He grant you your heart's desire, and fulfill all your plan.
May we rejoice in your triumph and raise our banners in the name of our God, May the Lord fulfill all your prayers!

Now I know well, the Lord will give victory
to His Anointed,
He will answer him from His holy place
with the strength of His conquering right hand.
Some are strong in chariots, some in horses,
but we in the Name of the Lord our God!
They have given way, they have fallen,
but we stand firm, we stay.
Give victory, O Lord, to the king,
in the day when we call on You, O hear us!

Psalm 19. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." This Psalm was probably composed to be sung at the time of offering sacrifice before the king's departure on a campaign. We pray for the leaders and soldiers of the Church militant in their struggles with the forces of evil, so that day by day the victory gained by Christ's redemption may be extended to all mankind. (Used in the Visiting of the sick).

## THANKSGIVING AND PRAYERS FOR THE KING

In Your strength, O Lord, the king is glad, in Your saving help how greatly he rejoices! You have given him the desire of his heart, not denied him the prayer of his lips, For You went before him with great blessings, on His head You placed a crown of pure gold. Life he asked of You, and You gave him length of days for ever and ever. Great is his glory in Your saving help, You have overshadowed him

with majesty and splendor:
You have made him to be a blessing forever,
You have gladdened him with joy in Your presence:
For the king puts his trust in the Lord,
and by grace of the Most High, he will stand fast.

May Your hand come down on all Your enemies,
Your right hand find those who hate You:
Make them burn as in a furnace
when You appear:
May the Lord consume them in His wrath,
fire devour them:

Destroy their children from the earth, and their seed from among mankind:

Psalm 20. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." A thanksgiving hymn for victory in past battles and a prayer for complete triumph over the enemies of God and His people. We pray this Psalm in thanksgiving to God the Father for our Lord's victory over sin and death, asking Him to complete the victory in us and in the whole world. (Used on the Vigil of Pentecost, Feasts of Martyrs and Confessors).

Though they plan evil against You,
though they weave plots,
they shall not prevail:
For You will put them to flight,
aim Your arrows straight at their faces!
Rise up, O Lord, in Your strength,
we will sing, sing the praise of Your might!

### THE GREAT SUFFERING OF THE MESSIAS AND ITS FRUIT

My God, my God, why have You forsaken me, far from my prayers, from the sound of my cry? My God, I cry out by day and You do not answer, by night and You do not heed me: But You dwell in the holy place, the praise of Israel. In You our fathers hoped, they hoped and You delivered them: To You they cried out and they were rescued, in You they trusted, and were not put to shame. But I am a worm, not a man, scorned by men, despised by the people: All those who see me, mock me, they open their lips, they nod their heads: "In the Lord he trusted, let Him free him, let Him rescue him if He loves him!" Yes, You have led me even from the womb, made me secure as at my mother's breast: I was given over to You from the beginning, from my mother's womb You have been my God: Now be not far from me, for I am in anguish, be near me, for there is no one to aid me.

Psalm 21. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." This Psalm describes in prophecy Christ's Passion, and the salvation achieved by His suffering and death. Our Lord used it as His Own prayer on the Cross (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34). It is also quoted in Matt. 27:39; Mark 15:29; Matt. 27:43; John 19:24; Heb. 2:12 and used in the Mass of Palm Sunday and the Offices of Holy Week).

Many bulls surround me, strong bulls of Basan beset me,

They have opened their mouths wide for me, like a lion they rave and roar.

My strength is poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint:

My heart is like wax, melting away in my breast:

My throat is dry like baked clay,

my tongue sticks to my mouth, You have brought me down to the dust of death.

See, many dogs surround me,

a band of evil men closes in on me:

They have pierced my hands and my feet,

I can count all my bones.

But they stare and gloat over me,

they divide my garments among them, they cast lots for my clothing.

But You, O Lord, be not far off,

O my strength, hasten to help me!

Deliver my soul from the sword,

my life from the hold of the dog:

Save me from the mouth of the lion, defend me from the horns of the wild bulls.

Your Name will I proclaim to my brethren, in the midst of the great assembly will I praise You: "O praise the Lord, you who fear Him:

give Him glory, all the race of Jacob, stand in awe of Him, all the race of Israel! For He has not scorned,

He has not spurned the poor man in his misery, He has not turned His face from him, but when he cried out, He answered." From You will come my song of praise in the great assembly,
I will fulfill my vows in the sight of those who
fear Him:

The poor shall eat and be filled,
they who seek the Lord shall praise Him:
"May your hearts live for ever!"

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, all the families of the nations shall fall down before Him:

For dominion is the Lord's, it is He Who rules the nations:

To Him alone shall bow down all the great ones of the earth, to Him shall kneel all those who go down in the dust.

And my soul shall live to Him,
my race shall serve Him:
They will tell of the Lord to the generation to come,
they will proclaim His justice to a people
that shall be born, "Thus did the Lord!"

#### THE GOOD SHEPHERD

The Lord is my shepherd,
 I shall not want:
He gives me rest in green pastures,
 He leads me to waters of peace:
He refreshes my soul,
 He guides me by right paths for His Name's sake:
Though I walk through a death-dark valley,
 I fear no harm,
For You are with me,
 Your rod and Your staff reassure me.

You spread a table before me,
in the sight of my enemies:
You perfume my head with oil,
my cup brims over:
Yes, goodness and mercy will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 22. "A Psalm. Of David." In the Old Testament, God calls Himself the Shepherd of His people; Our Lord is the Good Shepherd of the new Israel, the Church. The Fathers apply this Psalm especially to Our Lord's care of us in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist, and to His leading of His faithful safely through the dark valley of death to the "lawns of His Paradise forever green" (Commend. of a Departing Soul).

## SOLEMN PROCESSIONAL—THE LORD ENTERS THE HOLY PLACE

The earth is the Lord's and its fullness, the world and all who live there: For He founded it on the seas, He made it firm on the floods.

Who shall climb the Lord's mountain,
who shall stand in His holy place?
The clean of hand, the pure of heart,
he who does not set his mind on nothingness
nor swear falsely to his neighbor:

This man shall receive a blessing from the Lord, a reward from God his Savior:

Such is the race of those who seek for Him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

O gates, lift high your lintels: be raised,
O ancient doors,
that He may enter, the King of glory!
Who is He,
this King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle.

Psalm 23. "A Psalm. Of David." This was perhaps composed to be sung by alternate choirs when the Ark was first carried to Mt. Sion (2 Sam. 6) and later used as a pilgrim's hymn. We make it a prayer of praise for Our Lord's triumph at His Ascension and to ask for the grace to follow Him. (Quoted in 1 Cor. 10:26; and used in Ember Week of Advent, Vigil of Christmas, Feast of the Ascension, Rite of Tonsure).

O gates, lift high your lintels: be raised,
O ancient doors,
that He may enter, the King of glory.
Who is He,
this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
He is the King of glory!

### WAITING FOR THE LORD

To You do I lift up my soul,
O Lord, my God:
In You do I trust, let me not be put to shame,
let my enemies not exult over me!
Of all who hopefully await You, not one shall be put
to shame,
shame waits for those who rashly break faith with

Show me, O Lord, Your ways,
teach me Your paths,
Guide me in Your truth and teach me,
for You are God my Savior, and I await You
all the day long.

Remember, O Lord, Your pity, and Your kindness that have been from of old:

Remember not the sins of my youth and my follies, think of me in Your mercy,

because of Your goodness, O Lord!

Good is the Lord, and just,
and so He teaches His way to sinners,
He guides the lowly in justice,
He teaches the afflicted His way.
Every path of the Lord is kindness and faithfulness,
for those who keep His covenant and His laws:

Psalm 24. "Of David." This is an "alphabetic" Psalm, the verses beginning with the consecutive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. These Psalms follow a pattern like that of a "theme and variations" in musical compositions, treating of the subject from all angles, or, as we would say, "from A to Z." (Used in Masses of Advent, Lent, the Feast of the Sacred Heart).

For the sake of Your name, O Lord, forgive my sin, for it is great!

Who is the man that fears the Lord?

He shows him the way he should choose:

His soul shall dwell in good fortune and his seed shall inherit the land:

The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear Him, and His covenant for their enlightenment.

My eyes are always on the Lord,
that He may free my feet from the snare:

Turn and look at me, have pity on me,
for alone am I, and poor:

Relieve my heart's distress,
lead me out of my troubles:

End my misery and my anguish,
take away all my sins:

See my foes, for they are many
and cruelly they hate me:

Guard my life, rescue me,
let me not be ashamed,
for I have fled for refuge to You:

May innocence and goodness protect me,

O God, redeem Israel from all his tribulations!

for my hope is in You, O Lord!

### APPEAL TO GOD'S JUDGMENT

Give me justice, O Lord, for I have walked in innocence, trusting in the Lord, I have not faltered:

Search me, Lord, and try me, test me in heart and mind:—
Before my eyes is Your kindness, and I walk in Your truth:
I do not linger with men of lies, nor mingle with hypocrites:
I hate the company of the evil,
I do not stay with the wicked.

In innocence I wash my hands
and go round Your altar, O Lord,
Proclaiming aloud my thanksgiving,
telling all Your wonderful deeds:
O Lord, I love the house where You dwell,
the resting-place of Your glory.

Do not take away my soul with sinners,
nor my life with men of blood,—
Crime is on their hands,
their right hands are filled with bribes.
But I, I walk in innocence,
redeem me, O Lord, and have mercy!
My feet stand on an even path,—
in the company of the faithful, I will bless the Lord.

Psalm 25. "Of David." Our Lord alone, Who is "like us in all things save sin," can say this Psalm with complete truth and fullness of meaning. By Baptism He gives us the grace to partake of His innocence and to be worthy to approach His altar. (Used in the Offertory of the Mass).

### FEARLESS FAITH IN GOD

The Lord is my light and my salvation,—whom shall I fear?

The Lord is my life's stronghold,—of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked attack me to devour my flesh, my foes and my enemies—they stumble and fall!

Though a host encamp against me, my heart shall not fear.

though a war be waged against me, yet will I trust.

One thing I ask of the Lord, one thing I implore, to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, To behold the Lord's beauty,

to gaze on His temple.

For in the day of evil He will hide me in His tent, hide me in the secret place of His dwelling:

He will set me high on a rock,—

Even now my head is lifted up above my encircling foes.

And in His tent I will offer sacrifices, shouting with joy, I will sing to the Lord and give praise.

Hear my voice, O Lord, when I cry out, have pity and answer my prayer. My heart speaks to You, "I seek Your Face, Your Face, O Lord, do I seek":

Psalm 26. "Of David." A wonderful prayer of Christian hope, confidently thanking God for deliverance while still in the midst of the struggle, praying once more for help, and ending in perfect trust and courageous patience. (Used on the Feast of the Holy Family; during the Octave of the Ascension).

O hide not Your Face from me, repel not Your servant in anger:
You are my help,—do not cast me off, do not forsake me, O God my Savior!
Though father and mother forsake me, yet will the Lord accept me.

Teach me, O Lord, Your way,
lead me on an even path, because of all my enemies:
Deliver me not to the will of my foes,
for false witnesses, breathing out violence,
have risen against me:

I believe I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living: Wait for the Lord, be strong,

be valiant of heart and await the Lord!

## THE LORD, THE STRENGTH OF HIS PEOPLE

To You, O Lord, I cry out,
You Who are my Rock, be not deaf to me,
Lest if You hear me not
I become one of those who go down to the grave:
Hear the sound of my pleading when I cry to You,
when I lift my hands toward Your holy temple:
Do not snatch me away with sinners,
with men who do evil,

Who speak peaceful words to their neighbors and have evil in their hearts.

Deal with them according to their deeds according to the malice of their crimes:
Repay them for their handiwork,
give them back their own acts:
For they give no heed to the deeds of the Lord,
nor to His handiwork:
May He destroy them,
and not rebuild.

Blessed be the Lord,—
for He has heard the sound of my pleading:
The Lord, my strength and my shield,
in Him my heart confides, and help is given me:
And so my heart rejoices
and with my song I praise Him.

Psalm 27. "Of David." A prayer for ourselves and others in times of temptation. In the first stanza, we pray for help. In the second, sure that God will hear us, we give Him thanks as if the desired aid had already been granted; in the last stanza, we pray for the welfare of the whole Church.

The Lord is the strength of His people, the safe stronghold of His Anointed: O save Your people, bless Your inheritance, feed them, carry them forever!

### GOD'S MAJESTY APPEARS IN THE STORM

Declare to the Lord, O sons of God, declare to the Lord His glory and power, Declare to the Lord the glory due to His name, worship the Lord in holy attire.

The voice of the Lord over the waters, the God of glory thunders,

the Lord over the great waters:

The voice of the Lord in power, the voice of the Lord in majesty:

The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars, the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon:

the Lord breaks the cedars of Lebano:

He makes Lebanon skip like a calf, Sirion like a young wild ox:

The voice of the Lord strikes flames of fire, the voice of the Lord shakes the desert,

the Lord shakes the desert of Cades:

The voice of the Lord twists the oaks

and strips bare the forests,

and in His temple all cry "Glory,

The Lord is enthroned above the flood,

the Lord is enthroned as King forever.

May the Lord give strength to His people, may the Lord bless His people with peace!"

Psalm 28. "A Psalm. Of David." A great storm is seen as a manifestation of God's power and majesty. Glory to God in the highest . . . and on earth, peace to His people who are praising Him in His temple.

### THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH

I praise You, O Lord, for You have raised me up, giving my foes no cause for joy.

O Lord, my God,
I cried out to You and You healed me,
Lord, You led out my soul out of sheol,
You rescued me from the company of those

who go down to the grave.

Sing praise to the Lord, you His faithful, give thanks to His holy name.

For His wrath endures but an instant, His favor throughout a whole lifetime: Weeping comes in at nightfall,

Weeping comes in at nightfall, and rejoicing with the dawn.

In assurance once I said,
"Never shall I be troubled!"

In Your goodness, Lord, You had given me honor and strength,

when You hid Your face I was frightened.

Psalm 29. "A Psalm. A song for the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple. Of David." The Psalmist first thanks God for delivering him from some deadly illness and invites all the faithful to join him in giving thanks; then he describes what had happened—he had sinned through presumption, God punished him, he cried to God and God heard him. We pray this Psalm in thanksgiving for deliverance from great trials and temptations, and for the grace of repentance. (See p. xxxv in ref. to the 4th Stanza). (Used on Ash Wednesday).

<sup>1...</sup> out of the pit of death. This whole verse is used in the Introit of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in which the Enemy of the human race certainly found no cause for joy.

To You, O Lord, I cry out,
 I implore the mercy of my God:
"What gain to You in my life-blood,
 in my going down to the grave?
Can the dust give You praise
 or proclaim Your faithfulness?
Hear me Lord, and have pity on me,
 O Lord, be my aid":

You turned my lament to a dance of joy, took off my sackcloth, clothed me with gladness: So that my heart sings to You and is never silent, I praise You forever, O Lord my God.

# PRAYER OF ONE GREATLY AFFLICTED AND THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE

To You, O Lord, I fly for refuge,

let me never be put to shame,

in Your justice, deliver me,

Bend down to hear me,

hasten to rescue me:

Be to me a rock of refuge,

a strong fortress to save me:

For You are my rock and my fortress,

for the sake of Your Name You will lead me and guide

me:

You will take me out of the snare they have hidden for me,

for You are my refuge:

Into Your hands I commend my spirit,

You will redeem me, Lord, O faithful God!

You hate those who worship vain idols

but I, I trust in the Lord:

I will rejoice and be glad in Your mercy,

for You have seen my misery,

You have come to aid my soul in its troubles:

You have not given me up into enemy hands,

You have set my feet in a spacious place.

Psalm 30. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." The 5th verse was spoken by Our Lord as He was dying on the Cross (Luke 23:46), and the whole Psalm describes the Passion of Christ and His filial trust in His Father. In union with Him, we can pray for all His members on earth who are suffering misunderstanding and persecution for His sake. (Used on Septuagesima, Quinquagesima, Offices of Holy Week).

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in anguish, eyes, body and soul wasted with grief, My life is consumed with sadness,

my years with sighing:

My strength has failed me in my affliction, my bones have wasted away:

I have become a thing of scorn to my enemies, of loathing to my neighbors, a terror to my friends, those who see me in the street, run away from me,

I am out of men's thoughts as are the dead, cast away like a broken bowl.

I hear the crowd whispering, surrounding me with terror, Conspiring together against me, plotting to take my life.

But in You, O Lord, do I trust,
I say, You are my God!
My fate is in Your hands,
save me from the hand of my foes, my persecutors.
Let Your Face shine out on Your servant,
save me in Your mercy:

O Lord, let me not be ashamed, for to You have I made my cry.

May the wicked be confounded, may they be silenced in sheol:

How great, O Lord, is Your goodness

Let the lips of liars be dumb, that speak boldly in pride and scorn against the good.

stored up for those who fear You,
Shown to those who fly to You
in the sight of all mankind:
You hide them in the hiding-place of Your presence
far from the plottings of men:

You protect them in Your dwelling, far from the strife of tongues.

Blessed be the Lord,

Who has shown me His wonderful mercy in the midst of a fortified city:

Yes, I said in my anguish,
"I am driven far from Your sight!"
But You heard the sound of my pleading
when I cried out to You.

Love the Lord,
all you His holy ones!

For the Lord guards His faithful,
but He punishes those who act proudly.

Take courage, be strengthened in heart,
all you who hope in the Lord.

#### HAPPY CONFESSION

How happy the man whose iniquity is taken away, whose sin is covered:

How happy the man to whom the Lord imputes no guilt, in whose spirit is no deceit!

While I did not speak out, my bones were wasted, while I sighed all the day,

For by day and by night Your hand lay heavy upon me, my strength was dried up as grass in summer drought.

Then to You I confessed my sin, I did not hide my guilt,

I said "I will confess my wickedness to the Lord," and You took away the guilt of my sin!

For this, every faithful man will pray to You in times of stress, when flood-waters rise high, they will not reach him. You are my refuge, You will save me from anguish, You will surround me with the joy of freedom.

"I will school you, teach you the way you should go, give counsel, holding you in My sight:

Be not mindless like a horse or a mule that must be managed with bit and with bridle or they will not come near."

Many are the sorrows of the wicked, but kindness is all around him who trusts in the Lord. Rejoice in the Lord, and be glad, good men, shout for joy, all you true hearts!

Psalm 31. "Of David. A maskil." The second Penitential Psalm, one of the favorites of St. Augustine. (The last verse is used in Masses of Martyrs).

#### THE PLAN OF GOD'S HEART

Shout for joy in the Lord, good men,—
from true hearts praise comes well—
Give thanks to the Lord with the lyre,
with a ten-stringed harp sing His praises:
Sing to Him a new song,
play skillfully, shouting with joy!
For the word of the Lord is true,
all His work is to be trusted:
He cherishes justice and right,
the earth is filled with the Lord's kindness.

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, by a breath of His mouth, all their host: He takes up the waters of the sea as in a wineskin: in His storehouse He holds the floods.

Let the whole earth fear the Lord,
let all who dwell in it tremble before Him:

For He spoke,—and it was made,
He commanded,—and it stood forth!

The Lord brings to nothing the plans of nations,
He makes void the designs of peoples:

But the plan of the Lord stands forever,
from generation to generation
the designs of His heart.

Psalm 32. Having invited the faithful to praise God, the Psalmist sings of God's goodness to His Own, a goodness which shows itself in the wonders of creation and of the government of the world, and calls for our perfect trust. The great plan of the Lord is, of course, our redemption by Christ's Passion and Death. (Used in Easter-time, Pentecost Week, Feast of the Sacred Heart, All Saints, and Martyrs).

Happy the nation whose God is the Lord, the people He chose for His heritage!

The Lord looks down from heaven,
He sees all the children of men:
From His dwelling-place He beholds
all those who dwell on earth;—
He Who fashioned the hearts of all,
He is aware of all their deeds.

The king does not conquer by a great army, the warrior is not saved by his strength:

Even horses <sup>1</sup> do not assure victory, for all their strength, they cannot save!

See, the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him, on those who hope in His kindness,

That He may rescue their souls from death, and give them food in time of famine.

Our soul awaits the Lord,
He is our help and our shield:
Yes, in Him our heart rejoices,
we put our trust in His holy name:
Let Your mercy, O Lord, be upon us,
to the measure of our hope in You!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>To the Israelites, the war-horses and chariots of their powerful enemies naturally seemed invincible. For 'horses' we might today read 'atomic bombs.'

#### TASTE AND SEE

At all times will I bless the Lord,
His praise is ever in my mouth:
In the Lord let my soul glory,
the poor will hear me and be glad.
O glorify the Lord with me,
together let us praise His name!

I sought the Lord and He heard me,
He rescued me from all my fears:
Gaze at Him, and be bright with joy,
no shame darkening your faces:
See, the poor man cried and the Lord heard him,
He saved him from all his troubles.
The angel of the Lord encamps
round those who fear Him, and delivers them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good,
happy the man who flees to Him!

Fear the Lord, you His holy ones,
those who fear Him want for nothing:

Men of power grow poor and hungry,
but those who seek the Lord lack nothing good.

Abimelech who forced him to depart" (see I Sam. 21:1-22). An alphabetic Psalm on the theme of God's goodness to His faithful. This is traditionally a communion hymn because in Greek the word for 'good' in the sense of sweet or delightful is "chrestos," and so the Greek-speaking early Christians found a kind of holy pun in the first line of the 3rd stanza: "O taste and see that the Lord is good (chrestos) or Christ (Christos)," both meanings being literally fulfilled in holy Communion. (Quoted in I Peter 3:10-12; and used in Eve of Pentecost, All Saints, Martyrs).

Come, children, hear me,

The fear of the Lord I will teach you:
Are you a man who longs for life,
who desires long days of good fortune?
Keep your tongue from evil,
your lips from speaking with deceit:
Turn from evil, do good,
look for peace and pursue it.

The eyes of the Lord are on the good,
His ears attentive to their cries:
The Lord frowns on those who do evil,
to erase their memory from the earth.
Good men cry out and the Lord hears them,
He rescues them from all their troubles:

The Lord is near to the broken-hearted,

He saves the bruised in spirit:
A good man has many troubles,
but the Lord will free him from them all:
The Lord protects his every bone,
not one shall be broken:
Malice drives the wicked on to death,
those who hate the just man shall be punished:
The Lord redeems the souls of His servants,
no man will be punished who takes refuge in Him.

## PRAYER FOR HELP AGAINST UNJUST AND UNGRATEFUL ENEMIES

Attack, O Lord, those who attack me, with those who war against me, make war: Take up shield and buckler,

rise up to defend me:

Wield the spear and the battle-axe

against those who pursue me, say to my soul: "I am your salvation!"

Let those who seek my life be ashamed and disgraced, those who plot my ruin be turned back and

confounded:

Let them be like chaff before the wind, the Lord's angel driving them on: Dark and slippery be their road, the Lord's angel in pursuit:

For unprovoked they set a snare for me, unprovoked, they dug a pit to kill me: Let ruin find them unawares,

the snare they set catch them:
may they fall in the pit dug by their own hands!
But my soul will rejoice in the Lord,
and delight in His salvation:

All my bones will say,

"O Lord, who is like unto You!

You Who rescue the poor from the strong,
the poor and needy from the despoiler!"

Psalm 34. "Of David." We pray this Psalm in union with Christ and His members on earth who are being persecuted and slandered for His sake. (Used in Holy Week and Feasts of Popes).

Lying witnesses rise up, of what they accuse me, I know nothing: For good they repay me with evil, with desolation for my soul.

But I, when they were ill, put on sackcloth, I saddened my soul with fasting,

I poured forth prayers in my heart:

As if for a friend, for a brother, I went about sorrowful, like a man who mourns for his mother,

I bowed my head in grief.

Yet when I weakened, they rejoiced and gathered together,

they gathered together and struck me unawares:
Unceasing their rage against me, trying me and mocking
me,

gnashing their teeth in hatred.

O Lord, how long will You look on?

Save my soul from the roaring beasts,

my only life from the lions!

I will thank You in the great assembly, in the vast throng I will praise You:

Let my lying enemies not rejoice over me, let them not leer at me, who hate me without cause.

For it is not of peace that they speak,

against the peaceful men of the land they plan deceit.

They open their mouths against me:

They say: "We saw him with our own eyes!"

You have seen, O Lord! be not silent,
O Lord, be not far off!
Awake and see to my defence,
my Lord and my God, to my cause.
Judge me, O Lord, by Your justice,
my God, let them not rejoice over me:

Let them not think in their hearts: "Just as we wish!" let them not say: "We have swallowed him up!"

be made ashamed and confused,

Let those who glory over me
be clad with shame and disgrace:

But may those who favor my cause shout for joy and be
glad

and may they always say:
"Praised be the Lord,
Who wills the salvation of His servant!"
Then my tongue will proclaim Your justice,
all the day long Your praise.

Let those who rejoice in my woes

### HUMAN MALICE: DIVINE PROVIDENCE

Evil speaks to the wicked man in his heart,
he has no fear of God before his eyes:
He flatters himself in his thoughts
that his guilt will not be found out and detested:
False and deceiving the words from his mouth,
he has ceased to be wise and to do good.
Evil is what he plans, lying on his bed,
he is set on a way that is not good
and has no distaste for evil.

Your kindness, O Lord, reaches up to the heavens,
Your faithfulness to the clouds:

Your justice is like God's mountains,

Your judgments like the deep sea:

Your saving help, O Lord, is for men and beasts.

How grateful, O God, is Your kindness!

the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings:

They are filled with the bounty of Your house, You give them drink from the stream of Your joys: For with You is the fountain of life, and in Your light we see light.

O do not cease Your kindness to those who know You, and Your justice to hearts that are true:

Psalm 35. "For the choirmaster. Of David, servant of the Lord." The contrast of human wickedness and God's goodness urges us to ask for God's help against the wicked. We can pray this Psalm that, in spite of the malice of the devil and human weakness, all those outside God's house, the Church, may find their way there, and that we all may attain to the eternal joys of heaven. (Quoted in Rom. 3:15, John 4:14).

May the feet of the proud not overtake me, the hands of the wicked not seize me! See, all those who work evil have fallen, they are struck down and they cannot rise!

### THE MEEK WILL POSSESS THE LAND

Do not fret over those who do evil, do not envy those who do wrong: Soon they will shrivel like grass, wither away like green herbs.

Hope in the Lord and do good,—
you will dwell in the land, and enjoy it in peace:
Find your delight in the Lord,
and He will give you your heart's desire.

Commit your way to the Lord, trust in Him, He will act: He will make your justice shine like the dawn, your rights like the noonday sun.

Rest in the Lord, hope in Him:

Do not fret over him who walks the way of success, the man who devises evil.

Leave your wrath, lay away anger,
do not fret, lest you do wrong:
For those who do wrong will be destroyed,
but those who hope in the Lord will own the land.

Yet a little while,—and the wicked man will be no more, if you look for his place, he will not be there:

Psalm 36. "Of David." An alphabetic Psalm on the theme, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land (see also p. xxv). (This Psalm is quoted in Matt. 5:5; and used in Feasts of Martyrs, Doctors and Confessors).

But those who are patient will possess the land, they will rejoice in plenty and peace.

The wicked man plots against the good, he gnashes his teeth against him, The Lord laughs at the wicked, for He sees that his day is coming:

The wicked have drawn the sword and bent the bow to bring low the poor and needy, to cut down those who walk the way of rightness:—Their swords shall go through their own hearts, their bows shall be broken.

Better the meagre store of the good man, than the great wealth of the wicked: For the power of the wicked shall be broken, but the Lord will uphold the good.

The Lord watches over the life of those who live rightly, their heritage endures forever,

They will not be ashamed in times of trouble, in days of famine they will be filled:

But the impious will perish, the foes of the Lord, They will wither like the beauty of the fields, they will vanish away like smoke:

The wicked man borrows and does not repay, the good man has pity and gives: For those whom He blesses will have the land, and those whom He curses will be destroyed.

Man is given strength for each step by the Lord: and He approves his way: Though he fall, he does not remain fallen, for the Lord takes him by the hand. I was young and now I am old; but never have I seen a just man forsaken nor his sons begging their bread:

Always he lends freely and he gives, and his children shall be blessed.

Turn away from evil and do good and you shall abide forever: For the Lord loves what is right, He does not forsake His faithful.

Those who do wrong shall be destroyed, the descendants of the wicked shall be slain: The just shall possess the land, they will dwell in it forever.

The mouth of the good man utters wisdom, and his tongue speaks what is right, God's law is in his heart, his steps do not falter.

The wicked man spies on the good, he seeks his death: But the Lord will not leave him in his power, He will not condemn him when he is judged.

Trust in the Lord,
keep to His way:
He will raise you up to possess the land,
with joy will you see the destruction of the wicked.

I have seen a wicked man and proud exalting himself like a leafy cedar,—
And I passed by—and behold, he was not,
I sought him, he was not to be found.

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Watch the single of heart, think of the good; sons are for peaceful men, But the sinful will all be uprooted, the descendants of the wicked will be destroyed.

The salvation of the just is from the Lord,
He is their refuge in time of trouble:
The Lord helps them and delivers them,
He delivers them from the wicked and saves them
for they have taken refuge in Him.

#### PRAYER OF A REPENTANT SINNER

Lord, do not punish me in Your anger,
do not chastise me in Your wrath,
For Your arrows have pierced me deep,
heavy upon me is Your hand:
There is no health in my body, because of Your anger,
no soundness in my bones, because of my sin,
For my iniquities have risen over my head,
like an immense burden, they weigh me down.

My wounds are poisoned and festering because of my folly:
I am bent down, bowed over,
I go about sorrowful all the day,
My loins filled with pain like fire,
no health in my body:
Weakened, greatly worn,
I groan in anguish of heart.
O Lord, before You is all my desire,
my sighing is not hidden from You:—

My heart pounds, my strength fails, the very light of my eyes is gone.

My friends and my kinsmen hold aloof from my wounds, my neighbors stand far away.

Those who plot against my life lay snares,
who seek my disgrace threaten ruin,
they plan treachery all the day long.

But like a deaf man, I hear not, like a mute, I open not my mouth:

Psalm 37. "A Psalm of David. For remembrance." This is the Third Penitential Psalm.

I have become like a man who does not hear, whose mouth gives no reply.
But You, O Lord, are my hope, You will answer, O Lord my God,
When I say, "Let them not rejoice over me, nor glory over me when my foot stumbles!"

For I am near to falling,
and my sorrow is always with me:
Yes, I do confess my guilt,
and I sorrow for my sin.
But they are strong who hate me without reason,
and many are the foes I have not earned:
Those who for good give back evil,
they attack me because I follow after good.
Forsake me not, O Lord,
do not stand far off, O my God,
Hasten to my aid,
O Lord, my salvation!

#### MAN IS BUT A BREATH

I said "I will guard my ways,
lest I sin with my tongue:
I will put a curb on my mouth
when the wicked man is near me."
I was silent and dumb
holding back from rash speaking:
But my grief grew stronger,
my heart glowed within me,
A fire blazed up in my thoughts,
I spoke out with my tongue:

"Make known to me, Lord, my life's end, and the number of my days,

that I may see how frail I am,
How short You have made my days,
in Your eyes, my life is as nothing:
No man is more than a breath,
man goes his way like a shadow,
In vain is all his care,
he piles up wealth, not knowing who will spend it.

Psalm 38. "For the choirmaster. For Idithun. A Psalm. Of David." The Psalmist, afflicted by some severe trial, wishes to keep from complaining lest he blaspheme, but is unable to keep silent. He complains to God of the vanity and brevity of life, acknowledging that God has afflicted him in punishment for sin, and prays that God will hear and spare him. We can certainly use this Psalm to express our feelings to God at those moments when everything seems too difficult—it is often better to express our bitterness in prayer than to try to repress it. But in the light of the redemption, we should try to fill this prayer with Christian hope, acknowledging our sinfulness, God's just punishments, and offering our troubles to win the grace of hope for those who, not knowing Christ, can only be filled with bitterness by suffering and the thought of death.

And now, Lord, what can I hope for?
my trust is in You:
Free me from all my sins,
do not betray me to the scorn of fools!

I was speechless, not opening my mouth,
for You have done this:

Turn away from me Your scourge,
under the blow of Your hand, I am wasting away:
You chastise a man to punish his sin:

like a moth, You consume all he values, no man is more than a breath.

Hear my prayer, O Lord, lend Your ear to my cry, be not deaf to my weeping:For I am a traveller before You, a pilgrim like all my fathers:Turn Your gaze from me, that I may take breath,

before I depart, and cease to be!

#### THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER FOR HELP

With great hope have I hoped in the Lord, and He has bent down to me, heard my cry! He has drawn me out of the deadly pit, out of the clay of the mire:
He has given me firm footing on a rock, He has strengthened my steps:
In my mouth He has put a new song, a song of praise to our God:
Many will see and be filled with awe, they will find hope in the Lord.

Blest is that man who puts his trust in the Lord, who follows no idol-worshippers

nor men who deal in lies!
Beyond numbering, O Lord my God, are Your wonderful
works,

and in Your designs for us, none is like to You: Would I speak of them and proclaim them, too many are they to be numbered!

You have desired neither sacrifice nor oblation, but You have made me quick to hear You: 1

Psalm 39. "For the choirmaster. Of David. A Psalm." St. Paul (Heb. 10:5-9) quotes the first three verses of the third stanza as the words of Christ when He came into the world at the Incarnation (the 'book,' literally, the 'roll of the book' being the books of the Old Testament, which used to be written on long rolls of parchment). St. Augustine interprets this Psalm as a prayer of Christ, speaking in His Own name and in that of His Body, the Church.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. 'You have opened ears for me.'

You have demanded neither holocaust nor victim, then I said: "Behold I come,

it is written of me in the book:

To do Your will, my God, is my delight, and Your law is deep in my heart."

I have proclaimed Your justice in the great assembly, I have not closed my lips, Lord, as You know well:

Your justice I have not hidden in my heart,

I have told Your faithfulness and Your power to save:

In the great assembly, I have not concealed Your fidelity and Your grace.

And You, Lord, do not withhold Your mercies, may Your grace and Your fidelity ever guard me:

Evils beyond all numbering surround me, my sins enclose me so that I cannot see:

They outnumber the hairs of my head, my heart fails me.

May it please You, O Lord, to deliver me, O Lord, make haste to help me:

May they who seek my life be put to shame and confused, those eager for my ruin be turned back and disgraced:

May they be struck dumb in their shame who jeer at me in triumph.

But may all who are seeking You shout for joy and be glad in You,

May those who love Your saving help say always:

"Glory to the Lord!"

For I, I am poor and wretched, yet the Lord has care for me:

You are my help and my deliverer, my God, do not delay!

#### EVEN MY FRIEND . . .

He is blessed who cares for the poor and the lowly, on his day of misfortune, the Lord will save him:

The Lord will guard him and give him life,

He will make him blessed on earth

and not betray him to the will of his enemies:

On his bed of pain, the Lord will bring him aid,

when he is ill, He will take away all his weakness.

I say: "Lord, have pity on me,
heal me, for I have sinned against You!"
My enemies speak evil of me:
"When will he die and his name die with him?"
He who comes to visit me says empty words,
his heart stores up malice to utter when he has gone:
My foes all whisper about me together,
they hope for evils for me:
"A deadly sickness has hold of him,
he lies ill, he will not rise again!"
Even the friend in whom I trusted, who ate my bread,
he has lifted his heel against me!

But You, Lord, be kind to me, raise me up so that I may repay them:

Psalm 40. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." Our Lord Himself applied the last verse of the second stanza to His betrayal by Judas (John 13:31). Many authorities think that the Psalmist refers here to the treachery of Achitophel, David's friend and counsellor (2 Sam. 15:12) who, then is a type of Judas, as David is a type of Christ. We can pray this Psalm in union with Christ in His Passion, for all his members suffering from betrayal by false friends. The lines "Blessed be the Lord, etc." are not part of Psalm 40, but a doxology ending the first Book of Psalms.

By this shall I know that You love me, that my foe does not triumph over me: And You will keep me safe, You will set me forever in Your sight.

BLESSED BE THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, FOREVER AND EVER. AMEN. AMEN.

# SECOND BOOK OF PSALMS



#### HOMESICK FOR GOD'S HOUSE

As the deer longs for the running waters,
my soul longs, O God, for You!

My soul thirsts for God, the God of my life,
when may I come and see God's face?

Tears are my only food, day and night,
as daily I am taunted: "Where is your God?"

I recall,—pouring out my soul within me,—
how I used to walk in the great procession
leading to the house of God,

Among the shouts of joy and praise, in crowds keeping the feast-day.

Why are you sad, my soul, sighing within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him again,
He Who saves me from shame, my own God.

My soul is oppressed within me, when from the land of the Jordan and Hermon, from Mt. Misar, I remember You,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Lit. 'the salvation of my face.' The idea is like that of the Oriental 'saving face,' that is, saving a man's reputation, the face he presents to others.

Psalm 41. "For the choirmaster. A maskil. Of the sons of Core." This is the first two-thirds of a Psalm which is completed by Psalm 42. The Psalmist is in exile, far from Jerusalem, longing to take part once more in the solemn worship of God in the temple. The first verse is traditionally the hymn of those about to be baptized. We may also pray this Psalm for God's servants who have fallen into sin and who long to return to the joy of His service. (Used before the Blessing of the Font on Holy Saturday; in Baptism of adults).

Deep calls out to deep in the roar of Your cataracts, all Your surges have passed over me, all Your waves.<sup>2</sup> By day the Lord sends forth His mercy, and by night I sing to Him,

I praise the God of my life. I say to God, "My rock, why do You forget me? why must I go in sadness, oppressed by the enemy?" My very bones feel the blow as my enemies mock me, as daily I am taunted: "Where is your God?"

Why are you sad, my soul, sighing within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him again, He Who saves me from shame, my own God!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Raging water is a symbol of great affliction often used in Holy Scripture—here, probably, the sound of the mountain-torrents in the land of the Psalmist's exile immediately suggested the imagery.

#### HOMESICK FOR GOD'S ALTAR

Give me justice, O God; defend my cause against a faithless people,

free me from a deceitful and wicked man:

For You, O Lord, are my strength, why have You cast me off?

Why must I go in sadness, oppressed by the enemy?

Send Your light and Your truth, they will guide me, they will lead me to Your holy mountain and to Your dwelling.

And I shall go into the altar of God, to the God of my gladness and joy: And I shall praise You with my harp, O God, my God!

Why are you sad, my soul, sighing within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him again, He Who saves me from shame, my own God.

Psalm 42. The conclusion of the preceding Psalm. (Used in Sexagesima, Passion Sunday, at the beginning of Mass).

### PRAYER OF GOD'S PEOPLE IN TIME OF HUMILIATION

O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have told us, The wonders You worked in their days, wrought by Your hand in past ages: You drove out the heathen, planted our fathers, destroyed the tribes, made space for Your own.

For not by their sword did they gain the land, not by their own arm win the victory:

It was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your face, for You cherished them. It was You, my king and my God, it was You Who gave victories to Jacob:

Through You we struck down our enemies, in Your name we trampled on our foes:

For it was not in my bow that I trusted, nor was it my sword that saved me:

It was You Who saved us from our enemies, Who put to shame those who hated us:

In God did we glory day after day, ever giving praise to Your Name.

But now You have cast us off and given us up to shame; no longer do You go out with our armies: You have forced us to flee before our foes, those who hate us despoil us at will:

Psalm 43. "For the choirmaster. Of the sons of Core. A maskil." A prayer of the people of Israel in a time of oppression. We use it as a prayer of the people of God in the midst of the trials of this life and the apparent victories of the forces of evil. (Quoted in Rom. 8:36; used on Sexagesima Sunday).

You have marked us like sheep for the slaughter, scattered us among the nations:
You have sold Your people for a trifle, and made little profit from the sale.
You have made us the scorn of our neighbors, to those around us, a joke and a jeer:
You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughing-stock to the world:
My disgrace is always before me, my face is covered with shame,
At the sound of insults and mockery of the unfriendly and the hostile.

All this has come upon us,

though we did not forget You,
though we did not break Your covenant:
Our heart never turned away from You,
our step never strayed from Your paths,
Yet You destroyed us in the place of affliction,
You covered us with darkness.
Had we forgotten our God's name,
had we stretched out our hands to a strange god,
Would not God have found it out,
He Who knows the heart's secrets?
But for Your sake we are slain every day,
we are thought of as sheep to be slaughtered.

Awake, Lord, why are You sleeping?
arise, do not reject us forever!
Why do You hide Your face,
forgetting our misery, our oppression?
Our soul lies low in the dust,
our body cast down on the ground.
Rise up to aid us,
for the sake of Your love, set us free!

# ROYAL WEDDING SONG FOR THE MESSIAH

Eager words well up from my heart, for I sing my ode to the king, my tongue runs like the quill of a swift writer.

Fairer to behold than the sons of men, gracious speech has been lavished on your lips, truly God has blessed you forever.

Gird your sword at your side, valiant hero, take with you splendor and glory:
Ride out, victorious for truth and for justice,
May your right hand show you the great wonders it can perform:
Your arrows are sharp, peoples fall down before you, the foes of the king lose heart.
Your throne, O God, stands forever,
Your royal sceptre is a staff of justice:

Psalm 44. "For the choirmaster. According to the lilies. Of the sons of Core. A maskil. A love song." This may have been written for the marriage of one of the princes of David's line to a foreign princess, apparently from Tyre. But Catholic tradition, based on St. Paul's use of this Psalm in Heb. 1:8 ff., has always held the king to be Christ and the queen, His Bride the Church. This Psalm is also applied to Our Lady, in whom the Church is, as it were, summed up and come to full perfection; and also to every faithful Christian as sharing in the union of the Church with her Head. (Used in Masses of Sun. in the Octave of Christmas, the Vigil of Epiphany, Feast of the Purification, the Assumption, Sts. Peter & Paul, Our Lady, Virgin Martyrs, Virgins, Holy Women).

You love the right, You hate the wrong,

And therefore God, your God has anointed you with the oil of gladness,

raising you above your companions:

Myrrh, aloes and cassia make your robes fragrant, string music to bring you joy is sounding from ivory palaces:

The daughters of kings come to welcome you, the queen, adorned with gold of Ophir, takes her place at your right hand.

Hear, O daughter, see, and attend to my words,—forget your people and your father's house:

The King is pleased with your beauty, he is your Lord, obey him.

Men of Tyre are coming with gifts, the rich of the nation seek your favor.

The king's daughter enters, all glorious, her robes spun with gold:

Clad in a cloak well embroidered,

she is led in to the King,

her maidens following after.

Brought in with gladness and rejoicing, they enter the palace of the King.

To take your fathers' place, you will have sons, you will make them princes over the whole land: They will keep your name in memory, age after age,

forever will the people sing your praise.

#### A SONG OF SION

God is our refuge and our strength, our ever-present help in distress.

And so we fear not, though earth be rent asunder, though the mountains fall deep in the sea:

Let the waves foam and roar, let their surges shake the mountains: The Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

The flow of the river gladdens God's city, holy home of the Most High:
God is in her midst, she stands firm,
God will come to her aid from early dawn:
Nations rage and kingdoms totter,
His voice resounds, earth melts away,—
The Lord of hosts is with us,
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Come, see the great works of the Lord, the wonders He has wrought on the earth.

Psalm 45. "For the choirmaster. Of the sons of Core. According to the Virgins. A song." We pray this hymn of victory in thanksgiving to God for the blessings He gives us in His Church, which will be fulfilled and perfected in the eternal City of God in heaven. The river that gladdens God's city reminds us of the river of the garden of Paradise, and the waters of Baptism, and directs us to look forward to the "river of the water of life" of St. John's vision of heaven (Apoc. 22:11). As in the note for Psalm 44, the "city of God" may also be understood to refer to Our Lady, and to every faithful member of the Church. (Used in Masses of Virgin Martyrs and Virgins).

He has put an end to war in the whole world, He has snapped bows, broken spears, burned shields with fire:

"Be still, and know that I am God,
high over the peoples, high over the earth."
The Lord of hosts is with us,
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

#### SONG OF PRAISE TO GOD OUR RULER

Clap your hands, all you peoples,
acclaim our God with shouts of joy:
For the Lord is the Most High, to be revered,
the great king over all the earth!
He makes subject to us the peoples,
He puts the nations under our feet:
He chose for us our heritage,
the glory of Jacob, whom He loves.

God goes up to his throne amid shouts of joy, the Lord, with the sound of the trumpet:
Sing to our God, sing praise, sing to our King, sing praise!
For God is king over all the earth,—sing songs of praise!—
God rules over the peoples,
God sits on His holy throne.
The princes of the peoples come together with the people of the God of Abraham:
For all the great ones of the earth belong to God, He is high above all.

Psalm 46. "For the choirmaster. Of the sons of Core. A Psalm." The Psalmist sings of the final victory of God and of the establishment of the universal kingdom of the Messias, when Israel and the nations will become one kingdom under His rule. This prophecy is to be fulfilled in the universal rule of Christ the King, already being prepared, which will be finally perfected in the sight of all men at the Last Day. (Used in the Feast of the Ascension and its Octave).

#### THE GLORY OF GOD'S CITY

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God:
His holy mountain, rising fair, is the joy of the whole world:
Mount Sion in the far north 1 is the city of the great king:
God, in the midst of her palaces, has shown Himself a safe stronghold.

See them gather, the kings of the earth, they come on all in a body:
They stare, they are stunned, filled with terror, they flee away:
Trembling takes hold of them, like the anguish of a woman in travail, As when a wind from the East breaks up Tharsis' ships.

As we had heard, so now we see in the city of the Lord of hosts, In the city of our God: God has founded it for ever.

Psalm 47. "A song. A Psalm. Of the sons of Core." The Psalmist praises God Who has saved His holy city from a great attack by powerful enemies (first and second stanza); he leads the pilgrims into the temple to thank God for His saving help (third stanza); and invites them to see how the city stands secure and then go home to teach their children the praise of God. We pray this Psalm in thanksgiving to God for His care of the Church against which the gates of hell can never finally prevail. (Used in Mass of Purification, Sunday of Advent).

<sup>1 &</sup>quot;The far north," probably the expression used by the pagans of that time for the abode of their gods. So Jerusalem is the home of the one true God.

We remember, O Lord, Your mercy in the midst of Your temple:
As Your name, Lord, so also Your praise is known to the ends of the earth:
Your right hand is filled with justice,—
let mount Sion be joyful,
Let the cities of Juda be glad,
because of Your judgments!

Walk about Sion, go all round it, number her towers,
Study her ramparts,
go over her citadels:
That you may tell your children
"So great is our God:
Our God for always and forever,
He will lead us."

# THE PROBLEM OF THE PROSPERITY OF THE WICKED

Hear this, all you peoples,
listen, all you who live on earth,
Men of humble birth and noble,
rich and poor, all together:
My mouth shall speak wisdom,
my heart shall utter prudence:
My ear is intent on a proverb,
I will resolve my enigma to harp music.

Why should I be afraid in days of evil,
when the malice of my foes surrounds me?
They trust in their riches,
they boast of the greatness of their wealth:
But no man can free himself,
he cannot pay to God his own ransom:

The price of his life is too high,

he would never have enough

to live forever and not see death.

He sees wise men die:

fools and dolts,—they, too, depart and leave their wealth to strangers.

Tombs will be their home forever,

their dwelling age after age, though whole lands once bore their names.

Psalm 48. "For the choirmaster. Of the sons of Core. A Psalm." The 'enigma' is the perennial problem of the apparent prosperity of the wicked. We may pray this Psalm for those who take no thought of death, who truly 'live like the beasts that perish' that God may bring them to the light and joy of faith.

For the man of wealth will not live on, he is like the beasts that perish.

This is the way contented fools will go,
this the end of those now well pleased with fate,—
Like sheep they are driven to sheol,
death herds them, and the just rule over them.

Earth knows their form no more, sheol is their dwelling:

Yet God will redeem my life from the grave because He will raise me up.

Fear not when a man grows rich, when the wealth of his house increases:

He can take nothing with him to death, his goods cannot follow him down:

Though in his lifetime, he was pleased with his soul,—
"Men will praise you, you did well for yourself!"—

He will go to join the throng of his fathers, who will never again see the light.

A man living in wealth, who does not take thought, he is like the beasts that perish.

#### TRUE WORSHIP OF GOD

The Lord has spoken, the God of gods,

He summons the earth from the lands

of the sunrise to the sunset:

From Sion, most beautiful, God shines out, our God comes and He is not silent:

A devouring fire goes before Him, a tempest rages around Him:

He summons the heavens above and the earth,

He will judge His people:

"In My presence assemble My faithful, who have sealed My covenant with sacrifice:"

And the heavens proclaim His justice, for God Himself is the Judge.

"Hear, O My people, and I will speak, hear, O Israel, and I will witness against you, for I am God, your God.

Not for your sacrifices do I rebuke you,—
your burnt-offerings are continually before Me,—
I will not take a bullock from your house,
nor a goat from your fields:
For all the beasts of the forest are Mine,
the myriad beasts on My hills:

Psalm 49. "A Psalm of Asaph." God summons His people; He tells them that He desires the true sacrifice of prayer and praise, of which the legal sacrifices of the Law were meant to be signs; He rebukes also hypocrites and sinners; for salvation, both true devotion and right living are needed. We may pray this Psalm as an examination of conscience as to how well we fulfill God's requirements. (Used on 2nd Sunday of Advent).

I know all the birds of the air,
everything that moves in the fields is in My sight:
Were I hungry, I would not tell you,
for the earth and what fills it are Mine:
Do I eat the flesh of bulls,
do I drink the blood of goats?
To God, offer the sacrifice of praise,
fulfill the vows you have made to the Most High:
Call on Me in the day of distress,
I will free you, and you will give thanks to Me.

But to the sinner, God says:

"Why do you recite My Commandments, why have My covenant in your mouth? You who hate My ruling, who cast My words behind you? When you see a thief, you take up with him, you make common cause with adulterers, You open your mouth to evil speaking and your tongue is weaving lies:
You linger to speak against your own brothers, you dishonor the son of your mother.
You have done this and shall I be silent?
do you deem Me like to yourself?
I will reprove you, and lay these things openly before you.

Understand this, you who forget God:—
lest I should seize you and no one could save you:
He who offers a sacrifice of praise, he gives Me glory,
and to the man who lives rightly
I will show the salvation of God."

#### PRAYER FOR FORGIVENESS

Have mercy on me, O God, because of Your goodness, because of all Your deeds of mercy,

blot out my injustice:

Wash me free of my guilt, cleanse me of my sin.

For I acknowledge my guilt,
and my sin is ever before me:
Against You alone have I sinned,
I have done what was evil in Your sight:
So are You seen to be just in Your sentence,
to be right in Your condemnation.¹
Yes, in guilt was I born,
and in sin my mother conceived me:
But see, You love a heart that is true,

Cleanse me with a hyssop,<sup>2</sup> and I shall be made clean, wash me, and I shall become more white than snow:

and in the depths of my heart You teach me wisdom.

Psalm 50. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him after his sin with Bethsabee." (2 Sam. 12:1). This is the Fourth Penitential Psalm. St. Augustine interprets the last stanza as being fulfilled when the whole City of God made perfect after the resurrection will offer itself to God through Christ, in the love of the Holy Spirit. (Used in the Visitation of the Sick, Extreme Unction, Funeral Rites).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> God has punished the Psalmist by some obvious affliction,—his open acknowledgment of his sin will show that God was entirely just in so punishing him.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> A hyssop was a small bush whose twigs were used, as prescribed by Mosaic law, for various forms of ritual cleansing with water or blood (much as a priest today uses a holy-water sprinkler). Such ceremonies were signs of purification, but the Psalmist prays here that God may truly "un-sin" him. In Baptism, this is actually achieved, and as holy water is a reminder of Baptism, this Psalm-verse is often said during various ceremonies while holy water is being sprinkled.

Let me hear joy and gladness, let my bones that You have crushed now dance for joy:

Turn Your eyes away from my sins, and blot out all my guilt.

Create a clean heart for me, O my God, and renew in me a steadfast spirit:
Do not cast me out of Your presence, nor take away Your holy spirit:
Give me back the joy of Your salvation, strengthen in me an eager spirit.

I will teach Your ways to the wicked,
and sinners shall turn back to You!

Deliver me from blood-guilt, God, O God my Savior,
and my tongue will rejoice in Your justice:

O Lord, open my lips,
and my tongue will proclaim Your praise:

For sacrifice does not please You,
if I offered a holocaust, You would not accept it:

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit,
a broken and humbled heart, O God,
You will not disdain.

In Your goodness, O Lord, deal kindly with Sion, and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem:

Then the sacrifices of justice will please You, oblations and holocausts, then will they offer young bullocks on Your altar.

#### AGAINST THE WICKED AND POWERFUL

Why do you glory in wickedness,
O great men of infamy?
All the day long, you plan to do harm,
your tongue a sharp knife, a tool for deceit:
Evil you love more than good,
a lie more than truthful speech:
You love every word that does harm,
O crafty tongue!

For this God will destroy you,
He will dismiss you forever,
He will snatch you out of your tent,
uproot you from the land of the living.

Good men will look on and be filled with awe, and they will laugh at that man: "See the man who did not make God his stronghold, but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong in crime!"

But I, like an olive tree growing green
in the house of God,
I will trust in God's mercy forever:
I will bless You forever, for what You have done,
I will proclaim, in the sight of Your faithful,
the goodness of Your name.

Psalm 51. "For the choirmaster. A maskil. Of David. When Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, 'David went to the house of Abimelech.'" (1 Sam. 21:8). The Psalmist describes his deceitful enemy and foretells that God will punish him, while he himself, trusting in the Lord, will triumph. We can pray this Psalm for all those who are suffering from the lies and oppression of wicked men. (Used in the Vigils of Apostles).

#### WHAT FOOLS ARE THE WICKED!

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God":

Such men are corrupt, their deeds are horrible, there is not one who does good.

The Lord looks down from heaven on the children of men, to find one man who is wise, who seeks God:

They have all gone astray together,

all have become depraved, there is not one who does good, no, not one.

Will they never learn, these men who do evil, these men who devour my people as they eat bread, and do not invoke the Lord?

They will tremble with fear where there is no fear,

For God will scatter the bones of those who besiege you. They will be confounded, for God has cast them off.

O may it come from Sion, the salvation of Israel!

When God restores the well-being of His people, then shall Jacob exult, then shall Israel be glad!

Psalm 52. "For the choirmaster. According to Mahalath. A maskil. Of David." This is a variation of Psalm 13.

#### CRY FOR GOD'S HELP

By Your name, O God, save me,
by Your power, defend my cause:
O God, hear my prayer,
listen to the words of my mouth:
Proud men have risen against me,
fierce men seek my life,
not setting God before their eyes.

But see, God comes to my aid,
the Lord upholds my life:
Turn back this evil on my enemies,
in Your faithfulness, destroy them:
With gladness will I offer You sacrifice,
I will praise Your name, for it is good,
For it has freed me from all my trouble,
and my eyes see my foes confounded.

Psalm 53. "For the choirmaster. With stringed instruments. A maskil. Of David, when the Ziphites went to Saul and said: 'David is hiding among us.'" (1 Sam. 23:19 ff.; 26:1). This Psalm can be used as a prayer against temptations.

## PRAYER AGAINST ENEMIES AND A FAITHLESS FRIEND

Hearken, O God, to my prayer, do not hide from my pleading, Listen to me, hear me. I am overcome with sorrow. I am troubled by the shouts of the enemy. by the cries of the wicked: They bring evil down upon me, they attack me with fury. My heart quails within me, death's terrors fall upon me: Fear and trembling take hold of me. horror overwhelms me. And I say: "If I had wings like a dove, I would fly away and be at rest! Yes, I would flee far away. I would dwell in the desert: I would quickly seek shelter from the whirlwind, and from the storm."

Scatter them, O Lord, divide their counsels for I have seen violence and strife in the city,

Psalm 54. "For the choirmaster. With stringed instruments. A maskil. Of David." The Psalmist describes his fear and his longing to flee; he laments the sad state of his city, and his own betrayal by a friend; then he sings of his own trust in God and of his confident hope that justice will be done. We can pray this Psalm for all Christ's members suffering oppression and treachery, for all those in danger of being overcome by fear of evil. (Quoted in 1 Pet. 5:7).

Day and night they prowl round its walls: and crime and wrong-doing are within;

Treachery is within,

while oppression and deceit never leave its streets.

If some enemy had insulted me, I could bear it, if my foe had risen against me, I could hide from him:

But it was you, my fellow companion,

my comrade, my friend!

How glad we once were together, walking in procession to the house of God!

May death fall upon them unawares, may they go down, still living, into sheel:

For evil is in their houses,

in their very midst.
And I, I cry to God,

and the Lord will free me.

Evening, morning and noonday, I grieve and I sigh: and He will hear my cry.

He will free my soul in peace

from those who make war on me, so many against me.

God will hear and will cut them down,

He Who is king forever.

For these men will not change, nor will they fear God:

He raises his hand against his allies,

he breaks his own pact:

His face is smoother than cream,

but his heart makes war: His speech is softer than oil,

but it cuts like swords.

Cast your care on the Lord and He will uphold you, never will He let a just man stumble.

And You, O God,
will lead them down into the pit of ruin,
These men of force and fraud,
before half their days are done.
But I,
I trust in You, O Lord!

# TRUST IN GOD IN THE MIDST OF ENEMIES

Have mercy on me, O my God, for men tread me down, all day long they attack me, they oppress me!

Unceasing, my enemies harass me, so many are they who attack me:

O Most High, when fear assails me, in You do I put my trust.

In God, of Whose promise I sing, in God I put my trust, I have no fear how can man harm me?

All day long they speak against me, all their thoughts of me run to evil:

They meet together, they make plots to spy on my steps, longing to take my life.

Punish them for this crime,

in Your anger, O God, destroy the peoples.

My God, You have noted all the journeys of my exile, my tears are all gathered in Your flask;

is it not all written down in Your book?

Then my foes will be turned back

on the day that I call You, by this I know well that God is with me.

Psalm 55. "For the choirmaster. According to Jonath . . . re-hokim. A miktam. Of David, when the Philistines held him in Gath." (1 Sam. 21:10). We pray this Psalm for the grace to trust God in the midst of temptations and trials.

**(1)** 

In God, of Whose promise I sing, in God I put my trust, I have no fear, how can man harm me?

I am bound, my God, by the vows I have made, to You I will offer sacrifices of praise:

For You have snatched my soul from death, my feet from stumbling,

That I may walk in God's presence, in the light of the living.

## PERFECT TRUST IN THE MIDST OF PERSECUTION

Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in You my soul takes refuge,
I fly to the shadow of Your wings,
till the scourge passes by:

I call out to God, the Most High,
to God Who gives me blessings:
May He send from heaven to save me,
bring shame on those who harass my soul,
may God send me His kindness and His truth.

I lie down in the midst of lions, who devour the sons of men, Their teeth are like spears and arrows, their tongue like a sharp sword.

O God, show Yourself high above the heavens, above all the earth be Your glory.

They have laid a snare for my steps, they have oppressed my soul: They have dug a pit before me, may they fall in it themselves!

Psalm 56. "For the choirmaster. According to Ne destruxeris. Of David. A miktam. When he fled from Saul into the cave." (I Sam. 22:1-5). In the first part, the Psalmist implores God's help against the enemies who surround him on all sides. In the second, sure that help will come, he begins to sing God's praises. The second half is repeated with slight changes in Psalm 107. We may pray this Psalm for all those overwhelmed with trials and temptations, and to thank God for all His help to us and to our fellow-Christians.

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast;
I will sing and chant praises:
Awake, my soul; awake, harp and lyre,
I will awaken the dawn!

I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples,
I will praise You among the nations,
For Your mercy reaches to the skies,
Your faithfulness to the clouds:
O God, show Yourself high above the heavens,
above all the earth be Your glory!

### AGAINST UNJUST JUDGES

Men of power, do you render justice truly, do you judge rightly, O sons of men? No, in your hearts you do evil, your hands deal out injustice to the land!

From their mother's womb, the wicked have gone astray, even before their birth, liars are perverse:

They have venom like a snake's, like a deaf adder whose ear is shut, Lest it hear the voice of the charmer, of the charmer singing his spells.

O God, smash the teeth in their mouths, break, O Lord, the teeth of these lions, Let them disappear as water flows away, when they shoot their bows,

may their arrows be blunted:

May they disappear like a melting snail,¹
like one stillborn that never sees the light:
May they be rooted out alive, burned up
before they can flourish like thorns and thistles.

Psalm 57. "For the choirmaster. According to Ne destruxeris. Of David. A miktam." The Psalmist rebukes those who are supposed to be God's deputies in rendering justice, but who instead deal out evil; he describes their obstinate wickedness; and he calls on God's justice to destroy them. (See p. xxvii). We may pray this Psalm for the conversion of those who seem completely obstinate in wickedness, whose conversion would be a great defeat of the forces of evil and a cause of joy to good men.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> If this is the correct rendering of a probably corrupt original text, it would seem that the Psalmist thought of a snail as melting away because of the slimy trail it leaves behind.

The good man will rejoice to see this vengeance, he will wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. "Yes," men will say, "the good man is rewarded, Yes, there is a God Who renders justice on the earth!"

## PRAYER FOR HELP AGAINST MEN OF VIOLENCE

Deliver me, O my God, from my foes,
protect me against my enemies:

Deliver me from those who do evil,
from these men of blood, O free me!

For see, they lie in wait for my life,
men of power gather against me:

Not for my wrongdoing, O Lord, or my sin,
for no guilt of mine do they rush to attack me.

Awake, hasten to my aid and see:
for You, O Lord of hosts, You are the God of Israel!

They come in the evening, growling like dogs, they prowl around the city.

Hear the boasts that pour from their mouth, the abuse from their lips, "Why, who hears us?"

But You, Lord, You mock them,
You laugh at all the nations:

O my strength, I await You, for You, O God, are my stronghold, O God, my mercy!

My God will come to my aid, He will let me rejoice over my foes.

O God, destroy them, lest they harm my people, by Your power, make them stagger and fall,

O Lord, our shield!

Psalm 58. "For the choirmaster. According to Ne destruxeris. Of David. A miktam. When Saul sent men to watch his house and put him to death." (1 Sam. 19:11). We can pray this Psalm for the Church and for all of her members who are surrounded by the deceptions and violence of the forces of evil and of those who do their work.

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They sin with their mouths in the very word they speak, then let them be taken in their pride,

in the blasphemies and lies they have spoken.

Destroy them in wrath, destroy them that they may exist no more,

That men may know that God rules in Jacob, and to the very ends of the earth.

They come round in the evening, growling like dogs, they prowl around the city:

They wander about seeking food, and they howl not finding their fill.

But I, I will sing of Your strength, from the dawn I will rejoice in Your mercy:

For You are my stronghold, my refuge in the day of trouble.

I will sing to You, O my strength, for You, O God, are my stronghold,

O God, my mercy!

### HOPE IN DEFEAT

O God, You have spurned us, broken our battle lines, You have been angry,—O restore us!
You have shaken the country, split it open,—heal its breaches, for it totters.
You have been harsh with Your people, made us drink of a heady wine.
Raise a standard for those who fear You, where they may escape out of bow-shot;

where they may escape out of bow-shot; That your loved ones may be delivered, reach out Your right hand, and answer!

God has spoken in His sanctuary:

"I will go up to divide Sichem, measure the valley of Succoth; The land of Galaad is Mine and Manassee, Ephraim a helmet for My head, Juda My staff:

Moab is My basin for washing, on Edom I put My shoe, over Philistia I cry victory."

Who will lead me into a strong city? who will lead me even into Edom?

Psalm 59. "For the choirmaster. According to Lilium legis. A miktam. Of David. For teaching. When he fought against Aram Naharaim and Aram Soba; and Joab, coming back, killed twelve thousand Edomites in the 'valley of salt.'" (2 Sam. 8:3 ff.; 10:6 ff.; 1 Par. 18:12 ff.). The Psalmist mourns a disaster in battle, thanking God that at least a part of the army has been saved and asks God's help to fight again. He recalls God's promises to make all the neighboring peoples subject to the Israelites, and again he implores God's help. The second part of this Psalm is found also in Psalm 107. We may pray this Psalm for God's help for the Church and all her members in her battles with the forces of evil. (Used on Sexage-sima).

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O God, would You cast us off,
would You march no more at the head of our armies?
Give us aid against the enemy,
for vain is the help of man:
With God we will act with courage,
it is He Who will trample down our foes.

#### PRAYER OF THE KING

Listen, O God, to my cry,
give heed to my prayer!

From the end of the earth I cry to You,
as my heart fails me,

Set me high on the rock,
give me rest!

For You are my refuge,
a strong tower against the foe:

Would that I might live forever in Your tent,
take refuge in the shelter of Your wings!

For You, O God, You have received my offerings:
You will grant me the heritage of those
who fear Your name.

Add more days to the king's days of life, let his years be as many generations:

May he reign forever in God's presence, send mercy and steadfastness to guard him:

Then will I sing forever to Your name, fulfilling my vows day after day.

Psalm 60. "For the choirmaster. With stringed instruments. Of David." King David, driven into exile (2 Sam. 15-19) prays God to bring him back safely to the Holy City and the presence of God in the Ark on Mt. Sion. This prayer having been granted, he gives thanks to God and prays for long life and God's grace. We who are members of Christ the King and are still in exile from our heavenly homeland can pray this Psalm for the grace of coming safely to life everlasting.

PSALM 61

#### GOD, OUR ONLY HOPE

In God alone my soul finds rest, from Him alone comes my salvation: He alone is my rock and my deliverer, my stronghold, I shall not tremble.

How long will you all rush at a man, to throw him down like a sagging fence or a tottering wall?

They plan deceit, they delight in lies, blessings are on their lips and curses in their hearts.

In God alone my soul finds rest, from Him alone comes my hope: He alone is my rock and deliverer, my stronghold, I shall not tremble.

In God is my safety and my glory,
my rock of strength, my refuge is in God.
Ever hope in Him, my people,

pour out your hearts to Him,

God is our refuge!

Common men are but a breath, great men but a sham, Weighed in a balance altogether, they are lighter even than a breath.

Do not trust in extortion, do not glory in plunder, on riches and their increase never set your heart.

Psalm 61. "For the choirmaster. According to Idithun. A Psalm. Of David." Praise of God, our help and refuge against the most powerful enemies. (Quoted in Matt. 16:27; Rom. 2:6).

Once God has spoken,
these two things have I heard:
"Power is God's, and kindness is the Lord's,"
for You give to each man according to his work.

#### LONGING FOR GOD

O God, You are my God, with eager care I seek You:

For You my soul is thirsting, my flesh is longing as a parched and thirsty land longs for water.

So do I gaze at You in the sanctuary

that I may see Your power and Your glory:

Better than life itself is Your grace,

my lips will praise You:

So will I bless You all my life long, lifting up my hands to invoke Your name:

And my soul will be filled as with rich feasting, my mouth will praise You,

When, as I lie on my bed, I am mindful of You, through the night watches I think of You;— For You have come to aid me,

and I rejoice in the shadow of Your wings:

My soul clings to You,

Your right hand upholds me.

But those who seek my life,
let them go down to the depths of the earth,
Let them be given up to the sword,
become the prey of jackals.
The king shall rejoice in God,

those who swear by him shall be happy, for the mouths of liars shall be closed.

Psalm 62. "A Psalm. Of David, when he was in the wilderness of Juda." We pray this Psalm as a song of longing for a closer union with God on earth and the sight of Him in heaven, applying the last verse to the forces of evil who strive to prevent the rule of Christ the King. (Used in Masses of Easter-time).

### GOD'S JUDGMENT ON THE WICKED

Hear, O God, my voice, while I lament,
from the dread enemy defend my life:
Protect me from the plotting of the wicked,
from the tumult of those who do evil.
They whet their tongues like a sword,
they aim their sharp words like arrows,
To shoot at the good man from ambush,
suddenly they shoot at him, all unaware.
They firmly resolve on their evil plan,
they conspire to set hidden snares,
they say "Who can see us?"

They plan wicked schemes,

they hide what they have planned, in mind and heart unfathomable:

But God will shoot His arrow,
suddenly they will be struck down,
Their own tongues cause their ruin,—
all who see them nod their heads!
All tremble and proclaim God's work,
they weigh His actions:
The good man rejoices in the Lord
and takes refuge in Him,
and all right-hearted men rejoice!

Psalm 63. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." The Psalmist implores God's help against the wicked and deceitful men who plan to ruin the good, and proclaims the coming of God's judgment on them. We pray this Psalm that God may foil the designs of the Evil One who makes use of wicked men to further his designs against the good; that wicked men may realize that they can never be finally successful against God, and may come to be converted to Him. (Used in Masses of Martyrs).

## SOLEMN THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S BOUNTY

Praise is Your due, O God, in Sion
and the fulfilling of vows, O Hearer of prayers!

To You all flesh must come, because of our sins;
our faults overwhelm us, but You will forgive;

How blessed is the man whom You choose
and bring into Your presence,

he will dwell in Your courts:

May we be filled with the bounty of Your house, with the holiness of Your temple!

Your goodness answers us with wonders,

O God of our salvation,

hope of the ends of the world, and of the seas afar:

Your power sets firm the mountains,

You are girded with might,

You calm the raging sea,

the roaring of its waves and the tumult of the nations:

And all who live in the whole world fear You, because of Your wonderful deeds,

The farthest lands of east and west

You fill with joy.

You visit the earth and water it, You load it with riches:

Psalm 64. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David. A song." The Psalmist thanks God for forgiveness of sins and for being allowed to enter God's temple with its blessings; he praises God, the Creator and Lord of nature, ruler of history; and finally he gives thanks for God's goodness in blessing His people with an abundant harvest. We pray this Psalm in thanksgiving for all God's blessings in the natural and supernatural orders. (Used in Requiem Masses).

God's river is filled with water,

You prepare the grain, You prepare the earth for it, By soaking the furrows, settling the ridges:

You soften it with showers, You bless the first shoots:

You crown the year with Your kindness,

a rich harvest springs up as You pass by:

The desert pastures are blooming, the hills are clothed in gladness,

The mountains are clad with herds, the valleys covered with grain:

They shout with delight, they are singing!

## HYMN FOR A SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING

Shout to God with joy, all the world, sing to the glory of His name, make His praise resound: Say to God: "How astounding are Your deeds, so vast Your power, Your enemies pay You homage: All on earth bow down to You and sing, they sing praise to Your name!"

Come and see the works of God,
His astounding deeds among men!
He changed the sea to firm earth,
let them cross the river dry shod.

Let us rejoice in Him, by His power He rules forever: His eyes are watching the nations so that rebels may not spring up.

O people, bless our God,
make His praise resound:
He has given life to our souls,
not allowed our feet to stumble.

Psalm 65. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. A song." The Psalmist praises God as the ruler of the history of His people. First he invites the whole world to join in God's praise; then he recalls the wonders of the deliverance from Egypt, and the help that God has always given, though He has tried His people severely. For the perils now overcome, the people come to give the sacrifices they promised, to thank and praise God. We pray this Psalm in thanksgiving for our redemption, and for all God's graces to us and to the whole world. (Used on second Sunday after Epiphany, Easter time, the Vigil of the Ascension).

For You have tested us, O God,
You have tried us with fire, as silver is tried:
You have led us into a snare,
laid a great burden on our backs:
You have let men ride us down,
we have gone through fire and water,—
then You led us out to freedom.

I will come with holocausts into Your house, fulfilling the vows

That were uttered by my lips, that my voice promised in my distress.

Rich holocausts will I offer, with the smoke of rams, oxen and goats my sacrifice.

Come and hear, all you who fear God,
what great things He has done for my soul!
My voice cried out to Him
my tongue gave him praise:
Had my heart willed injustice,
never would the Lord have answered me:
And yet the Lord did hear me,
He gave heed to the cry of my prayer.
Blessed be God! He did not repulse my prayer,
He did not refuse me His mercy.

## MAY ALL NATIONS JOIN IN GOD'S PRAISE

May God have mercy on us and bless us, with face serene may He shine on us, So that on earth His way may be known, among all races His salvation.

Let the peoples praise You, O God, let all the peoples praise You!

Let the nations be glad
let them shout with joy,
For You judge the peoples aright,
You guide the nations of the earth.
Let the peoples praise You, O God,
let all the peoples praise You!

The earth has given its fruit,
God, our God has blessed us:
May God give us His blessing,
and may all the ends of the earth revere Him!

Psalm 66. "For the choirmaster. On stringed instruments. A Psalm. A song." This Psalm was perhaps composed in thanksgiving for a bountiful harvest, but rises to the hope of bringing to all nations to share in the messianic blessings of the knowledge and service of God. Let us say this prayer for our missionaries, that the good news of the Faith may reach the whole world. (Used on Holy Thursday, Good Friday).

#### GOD'S TRIUMPHANT MARCH

God rises up, His enemies are scattered, those who hate Him flee from His presence: As smoke is blown off,

so are they:

As wax melts before the fire, so the wicked perish before God's face: But the just are glad, they rejoice and exult

in God's sight,

they delight in joy.

Sing to God, sing praise to His name:
 make a way for Him Who rides through the desert:
The Lord is His name,
 rejoice before Him!
Father of orphans, Defender of widows,
 God in His Holy dwelling:
God makes ready a home for the forsaken,

He leads the captives out to freedom,
only rebels remain in a parched land.

Psalm 67. "For the choirmaster. Of David. A Psalm. A song." This Psalm, that begins with the ancient war-cry of Israel, used when the Ark was carried into battle, describes the whole history of Israel as the triumphant journey of the Lord, present in the Ark of the Covenant, from Egypt to Mt. Sion. It may have been composed for the solemn installation of the Ark in Solomon's temple. We sing it in praise of the triumph of Christ over sin and death by His death on the Cross, the triumph which was inaugurated in His Resurrection and His Ascension, which is being extended through His Church to all mankind until it is to be completed in glory in His whole Church at the Last Day. (Quoted in Eph. 4:8, and used in Masses of the Ascension, Pentecost and Pentecost week, Martyrs, Confessors, and in the Commendation of a Departing Soul).

O God, when You went out at the head of Your people, when You advanced through the desert,

The earth trembled, the heavens melted before God, Sinai trembled before the Lord, the God of Israel.

You sent a great shower of rain, O God,

on the land of Your heritage,

it was weary and You refreshed it.

Your flock dwelt on the land, prepared in Your goodness, O God, for the poor.

The Lord announces the word,
women carry the glad tidings, in a great host:
"Kings and armies, they flee, they flee,
and the household shall share the spoils.

While you rest there among the sheepfolds: the wings of the dove shine with silver,

its wings shimmer with gold:

While there the Almighty was scattering the kings, snow fell on Salmon." 1

The mountains of Basan are high towering peaks have the mountains of Basan:
Why look with disdain, O towering peaks, at the mountain God has chosen for His dwelling, yes, where the Lord will dwell forever?<sup>2</sup>

God with ten thousand chariots,
the Lord comes from Sinai to the sanctuary:
You have ascended on high,
You have taken captives,
You have received men in tribute,
even those unwilling to dwell with the Lord God.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The Hebrew text of this stanza is very obscure: the dove is perhaps a figure of the victorious army of Israel: the snow perhaps refers to the enemy falling like snow-flakes. Salmon is probably a mountain in Basan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The image is that all the high mountains in the land of Israel are seen as wondering why Mount Sion, so much lower and less imposing than they, has been chosen for God's dwelling-place.

Blessed each day be the Lord!

The God of our salvation, He bears our burdens:

Our God is a God Who saves,

the Lord God gives escape from death:

God will suddenly smite the head of His enemies, the hairy crowns of those who delight in crimes; The Lord has spoken:

"I will bring them back from Basan,

back from the depths of the sea,

That your foot may bathe in blood,
the tongues of your dogs have a share in the booty."

They see Your entrance, O God,

the entrance of my God, my King, into the sanctuary:

Ahead come the singers, the minstrels follow after, in the midst the young maidens strike the timbrels:

"Bless God in festal choirs,

bless the Lord, O you children of Israel."

See Benjamin, the youngest, leading them; the princes of Juda with their throngs, the princes of Zabulon, the princes of Nephtali!

Show forth, O God, Your power,

the power, O God, that You have used for our sake, For the sake of Your Temple, which is in Jerusalem, There may kings offer You their gifts.

Rebuke the beast of the reeds,

the herd of bulls, the peoples like bullocks:

May they bow down to You, bringing bars of silver, scatter the nations who delight in war!

Let men of power come from Egypt, Ethiopia hold its hands out to God!

Kingdoms of the earth, sing to God, sing a hymn of praise to the Lord:

He is riding on the heavens, the ancient heavens, behold He sends out His voice, a voice of might: "Acknowledge the power of God!"
His splendor is upon Israel,

His power is in the clouds:

God is to be feared in His holy place, He, the God of Israel:

He gives power and strength to His people, Blessed be God!

# PRAYER OF A MAN SUFFERING GREATLY IN GOD'S CAUSE

Save me, O God,
for the waters have risen up to my throat,
I am sinking in the mire
and I find no foothold:
I have fallen into deep water,
the current sweeps me away:
Wearied with crying, my throat is on fire,
my eyes are failing while I watch for my God.
Those who hate me for no reason
outnumber the hairs of my head:
Those who persecute me for no cause
are stronger than are my bones:
I must give back
what I did not steal!

O God, You know all my folly, my faults are not hidden from You. May they not need to blush because of me, those who hope in You, Lord, Lord of hosts:

Psalm 68. "For the choirmaster. According to The lilies. Of David." The Psalmist vividly describes his affliction and, that it is undeserved and has come upon him because of his fidelity to God. He implores God to deliver him and punish his enemies, and promises praise and thanks. An application follows to the exiles in Babylon who were longing for the restoration of the Holy City and nation. The New Testament frequently applies this Psalm to the sufferings of Christ: Matt. 27, 34 and 48; Mark 15:36; John 19:28-29; John 15:25; Acts 1:20; Rom. 11:9-10; 15:3; John 2:17. (Used in the Mass of Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday, Holy Week, Feast of the Sacred Heart). We may pray this Psalm with Our Lord in His Passion, with and for all His suffering members of earth.

May they not be put to shame through me, they who seek You, O God of Israel!

It is for Your sake that I have borne reproach, that shame has covered my face,

That I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to the sons of my mother.

For the zeal of Your house devours me, on me fall the insults of those who scorn You.

I humbled myself with fasting, and it earned me scorn:

I clad myself in sackcloth, and they made me a jest:

I am a story for loungers at the gate, a song for drunkards filled with wine.

But my prayer is to You, in the time of grace, O God:

In Your great goodness, hear me, in the steadfastness of Your aid.

Snatch me out of the mire, let me not be sucked down,

Free me from those who hate me, lift me out of the deep waters:

May the current not sweep me away,

the abyss not swallow me up,

the mouth of the pit not close on me!

Hear me, O Lord, full of kindness is Your grace, because of all Your deeds of mercy, O look upon me:

Do not hide Your face from Your servant,

I am in anguish, answer quickly:

Come near to my soul, redeem it, because of my enemies, deliver me!

For You know my disgrace, my confusion, and my shame, all who persecute me are in Your sight:

Disgrace has broken my heart, I am failing:

I looked for compassion, but in vain, for those who would console me, and I found none:

For food, they gave me poison, in my thirst, they gave me vinegar to drink.

Let their own tables become a snare for them, a trap for their friends!

Let their eyes be darkened so that they do not see, make their knees always tremble:

Pour out on them Your fury,

let the fire of Your wrath overtake them:

Let their dwelling be laid waste, no one to live in their tents:

For they persecuted the man You had brought low, they added to his pain whom You had wounded:

Add more crimes to their crimes,

in Your sight let them not be called just:

Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, may they not be recorded with the just!

Wretched am I, and in pain,
may Your help, O God, set me free!
With a hymn will I praise God's name,
give Him glory with a song of thanksgiving,
More pleasing to the Lord than a bullock,
a young bullock with horn and hoof.
See, you poor, and rejoice,
you who seek God, may your heart live again!
For the Lord hears the needy,
He does not scorn His captives.
May heaven and earth give Him praise,
the sea and all its creatures:

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For God will deliver Sion,
He will rebuild the cities of Juda:
They will dwell there
and possess the land.
The race of His servants will inherit it,
those who love His name will inhabit it.

#### PSALM 69

#### PRAYER FOR DIVINE AID

Be pleased, O Lord, to deliver me, O Lord, make haste to help me:

May they who seek my life be put to shame and confused, those eager for my ruin be turned back and disgraced:

May they be struck dumb in their shame who triumph over me.

But may all those who seek You, shout for joy and be glad in You,

May they who love Your salvation say always:

"Glory to God!"

But I, I am poor and wretched, O God, come to my aid:

You are my help and my deliverer,

O Lord, do not delay!

Psalm 69. "For the choirmaster. Of David. For remembrance." This Psalm is almost the same as one section of Psalm 39, from which it may have been taken as being a prayer complete in itself.

### "IN MY OLD AGE, DO NOT CAST ME OFF!"

In You, O Lord, I take refuge, let me never be put to shame! In Your justice, free me, deliver me, turn Your ear to me and save me: Be to me a rock of refuge, a fortress of safety. for my rock, my fortress, it is You! My God, snatch me from the hand of the wicked, from the grip of the unjust, the violent: For it is You, O my God, Whom I await, O Lord, my hope since my youth: I have leaned on You from my birth, from my mother's womb You have been my protector, in You I have always hoped. I have been a cause for amazement to many, for You have been my strong refuge: My mouth is filled with Your praise, filled all the day with Your glory.

Now I am old, do not cast me off, as my strength fails, do not forsake me: For my enemies talk of me, watching me, they plot together,

Psalm 70. The Psalmist is an old man who has served God all his life, now persecuted in his old age, appealing to God to free him yet again, as He has often done before, and promising to teach God's goodness to others and to praise Him. We may pray this Psalm with the whole Church suffering persecution on earth; and also, in particular, for the old who need God's special help to make the trials of their last years a final preparation for heaven. (Used in the Mass of Pentecost Wed.).

Saying: "God has abandoned him, let us pursue him, let us seize him, for he has none to defend him."

Lord, do not stay far away, my God, hasten to help me!

Let those who seek my life be delivered to confusion and ruin!

May those who seek my misfortune be covered with shame and with scorn!

But I will not cease to hope, and to add to all Your praises:

My mouth will proclaim Your justice, day after day Your saving deeds,

their number beyond my knowing:

I will declare the power of God,
O Lord I will praise the justice that is Yours alone.

Since my youth, O God, You have taught me, and even now, I proclaim Your wonders:

Now I am old and my hair is white,

O Lord, do not forsake me:

So that I may make known Your arm

to the generation to come,

and Your justice that reaches to heaven.

How great are Your deeds,

O God, Who is like unto You?

You laid trials upon me, many and bitter,—again You give me life,

You raise me up from the depths of the earth, now add to my honor, console me once more.

And so I will praise You on the lyre,
O my God, for Your faithfulness,
I will sing to You on my harp,
O Holy One of Israel.

My lips will shout for joy when I sing to You,
and my soul that You have redeemed:

My tongue will proclaim Your justice day after day,
for confounded and dishonored

are those who sought my ruin.

### THE RULE OF THE MESSIAS

Grant to the king, O God, Your skill in judgment, to him, the king's son, Your justice:

He will judge Your people with justice,

Your poor with right judgment:

The mountains will bring peace to the people.

The mountains will bring peace to the people, and the hills justice:

He will defend the poor of our people, free the sons of the needy, crush the oppressor.

He will live on like the sun,
like the moon, age after age:
He will come down like rain on the grass,
like showers watering the earth:
In his days the right will flourish,
peace abound, till the moon be no more.

He will rule from sea to sea,
from the River to the ends of the earth.¹
His foes will kneel before him,
his enemies lick the dust:
The kings of Tharsis and the isles will pay tribute,
the kings of Saba and Arabia offer gifts:

Psalm 71. "Of Solomon." This Psalm may have been written on the occasion of a new king's coming to the throne of Israel, since all the rulers of David's house pre-figured the true King to come, Christ. But Jewish and Christian tradition says that the Psalm sings of the Messias and His reign. We sing this Psalm in praise of Christ the King and His kingdom of everlasting peace that is being prepared in the Church and will come in fullness on the Last Day. (Used in the Feast of Epiphany, of Christ the King).

<sup>1</sup> I.e., from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, from the Euphrates to the islands of southwestern Europe, marking the boundaries of the civilized world.

All kings will pay him homage, all nations will serve him.

For he will rescue the poor man crying for help, the needy with none to help him:

He will have pity on the weak and the poor, he will save the souls of the afflicted:

He will free them from violence and oppression,

in his eyes, their blood will have great worth.

So he will live on,
and men will bring him Arabian gold,
They will always pray for him,
they will bless him forever.
Grain will abound in the land,
on mountain summits, the crops rustle like Lebanon:
Those who dwell in the cities shall flourish
like the grass of the fields:
His name shall be blessed forever,

his name shall endure as long as the sun gives light. In him shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed, all the nations shall proclaim him blessed!

BLESSED BE THE LORD, THE GOD OF ISRAEL, HE WHO ALONE DOES WONDERS! BLESSED FOREVER BE HIS GLORIOUS NAME AND MAY ALL THE EARTH BE FILLED WITH HIS GLORY! AMEN! AMEN!

# THIRD BOOK OF PSALMS

# THE PROBLEM OF THE HAPPINESS OF THE WICKED, AND ITS SOLUTION

How good is God to the steadfast, the Lord, to the clean of heart: But my feet were near to stumbling, as I walked, I almost fell: For I was envious of the godless, seeing the prosperity of the wicked: They suffer no pain; hale and hearty are their bodies: They share not in human misery, they are not afflicted like mortal men: And pride adorns them like a necklace, violence is wrapped round them like a robe: Their iniquity comes forth from their gross hearts, their delusions of mind break out: They jeer and speak evil, they threaten oppression from on high: Their speech attacks heaven itself. their tongue leaves nothing untouched.1

So my people turn to them, they drink deeply of their waters: And they say: "How can God know? does the Most High have knowledge of them?

Psalm 72. "A Psalm. Of Asaph." This beautiful Psalm gives an answer to the problem of the prosperity of the wicked—not in this life, but the next will the godless be punished and the good enjoy God forever. We may pray this Psalm for an increase of Christian hope in ourselves and others. (Used on Palm Sunday).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lit. 'strays over the whole earth.'

See, so it is with sinners,—
always at ease, their power increasing!"

Have I then kept my heart clean in vain,
in vain washed my hands in innocence?
For I suffer scourges day after day,
I am chastised every morning:
If I had thought "I will talk as they do,"
I would have deserted the race of Your children.
Then I labored to understand,
and it seemed hard to me:

Until I went into the sanctuary of God and understood the fate of the wicked:

Indeed, You set them on a slippery road,
You cast them down to ruin:
Suddenly they are laid waste,
carried off, consumed by great terror:
Like a dream when one awakes, O Lord,
so when You arise, You will dismiss these phantoms.
When my mind grew sore
and my heart was tortured,
Then was I foolish, knowing nothing,
I was like a brute heast before You.

Yet I am always with You,
You have taken my right hand:
You guide me with Your counsel,
and You will receive me at last into glory.
Who is in heaven for me, save You?
If I am but with You, earth has no delights:
My flesh and my heart fail me,
God is the rock of my heart and my lot forever.
Truly those who go far from You, perish,
and those who are unfaithful, You destroy:

To be near to God, this is my good, to find my refuge in God the Lord. I will tell of all Your deeds, in the gates of the daughter of Sion.

## LAMENT AND PRAYER FOR THE SANCTUARY LAID WASTE

Why, O God, have You cast us off forever, why does Your wrath burn on against the sheep of Your pasture?

Remember the flock that You established of old, the tribe that You redeemed as Your heritage, mount Sion that You chose for Your dwelling.

Turn Your steps to these utter ruins,—

the foe has laid waste everything in the sanctuary:

Your enemies have raged in the place of Your assembly, they have set up their standards in triumph:

Like men wielding axes in a thick wood, with hatchets and hammers they have hacked down its gates:

They have given over Your sanctuary to fire, they have desecrated the dwelling place of Your name. They have said in their hearts: "Let us destroy them all! let us burn up all the holy places of God in the land!" Our signs, we see them no more; we have no prophet: how long? None of us knows.

How long, O God, shall the enemy taunt us, shall the foe blaspheme Your name forever? Why do You turn away Your hand, keep Your right hand in Your bosom?

Psalm 73. "A maskil. Of Asaph." The Psalmist mourns over the destruction of the temple by the Babylonians and implores God to have mercy. Thinking of the wonders wrought by God in the deliverance of His people from Egypt, and also in the creation of the world, he implores Him to come and rescue His Own. We pray this Psalm for the Church, persecuted in so many places throughout the world.

And yet God is my king from of old,

He has wrought saving deeds in our midst:
By Your might You rent the sea,

crushed the heads of the dragon in the waves:
You have broken the heads of Leviathan,¹

and given him as food to the beasts of the sea.
You made the fountains and brooks gush forth,

You dried up never-failing rivers:
The day is Yours and the night,

You set up the moon and the sun:
You established all the bounds of the earth,
summer and winter,—You made them.

Remember how the enemy insults You, O Lord, a senseless people blasphemes Your name:

Deliver not Your dove's life to the vulture, nor forget forever the life of Your poor:

Think of Your covenant,—

every corner of our land,

every field is now filled with violence.

May the oppressed not come back disheartened, may the needy and poor praise Your name:

Rise up, O God, defend Your cause, consider the insults these fools hurl at You daily:

Do not forget the clamor of Your enemies, the uproar of Your foes that never ends.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A mythical sea-monster, here used, like the dragon in the preceding verse, to stand for the powerful Egyptians overwhelmed in the waves of the Red Sea at the Exodus.

### THE LORD THE JUST JUDGE

We praise You, O God, we praise You, we call on Your name, we tell Your wonders. "When I have appointed the time, it is I Who will judge aright:

If the earth shakes with all who dwell there, it is I Who will strengthen its pillars."

I say to the senseless: "Do not play the fool," to the wicked: "Do not raise your heads, Do not raise your heads against the Most High, do not talk against God, speaking insolence,"

For neither from the east, nor from the west, neither from the desert nor the mountains—God is the judge,—one He casts down, one He raises up.

In the Lord's hand is a cup, foaming with wine, full of spices: He pours out, all the wicked of the earth

will drink of it,

they will empty it to the dregs.

Psalm 74. "For the choirmaster. According to Ne destruxeris. A Psalm. Of Asaph. A song." The Psalmist looks forward to the Last Judgment, already being prepared, when, not from the four corners of the earth, but from heaven, God will come to judge all men and reward them according to their deeds. We can pray this Psalm for the grace, as the prayer for Christmas says, so now to receive Christ as our Redeemer, that we will not fear His coming as our judge.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lit. "horns," the horns of a wild beast are a powerful weapon; also an adornment—Hence the frequent use of 'horn' as an image both of power and of honor.

But I will rejoice forever,
I will sing praise to the God of Jacob.
All the power of the wicked will be broken,
and the power of the just be raised high.

### SONG OF TRIUMPH AFTER A GREAT VICTORY

God is renowned throughout Juda, in Israel great is His name:
In Salem He has His tent,
His dwelling-place in Sion:
There He shattered the burning shafts the shield, the sword and the lance.

Shining with light, O most powerful,
You came from the eternal mountains,
The stout of heart have been despoiled,
they slept their sleep,

the hands of all the mighty have failed them:

At Your threat, O God of Jacob, chariot and horse lay still.

How You are to be feared!
who can withstand the force of Your wrath?
From high heaven You pronounced sentence:
the earth trembled and was silent,
When God rose up in judgment
to save the afflicted all over the earth.

For the fury of Edom will give You glory, the remnants of Emath make You a feast-day.

Psalm 75. "For the choirmaster. With stringed instruments. A Psalm. Of Asaph. A song." This Psalm seems to have been written after a striking victory of God's power over a great enemy, perhaps the army of Sennacherib (4 Kings 19). We may pray this Psalm in thanksgiving to God for His redemption, the daily victories of His grace, His final triumph at the Last Day. (Used on Easter).

Make vows to the Lord Your God, and fulfill them, may all around Him bring Him gifts, He the Terrible: For He cuts down the pride of princes, He is to be feared by the kings of the earth.

#### LAMENT AND SOLACE IN AFFLICTION

My voice rises to God, and I cry to Him, my voice rises to God, may He hear me! In the day of distress I seek the Lord, By night my hands are stretched out without rest, my soul refuses comfort: Remembering God, I groan, as I meditate, my spirit fails: You hold my eyes from closing, I am troubled and I cannot speak: I think of the days of old, I recall the years gone by: I go over them by night in my heart, I consider, my spirit wonders: "Will the Lord cast us off forever, nevermore grant us His favor? Will His kindness cease forever, the promise be in vain for all generations? Has God forgotten to have pity, in anger, has He closed in His mercy?" And I say: "This is my sorrow, that the right hand of the Most High has changed."

Psalm 76. "For the choirmaster. According to 'ldithun.' Of Asaph. A Psalm." This Psalm comes out of some period of great and long-lasting calamity, probably the time of the Babylonian exile. The Psalmist, continually praying and meditating, thinks that God must have changed His providential designs for His People to leave them in such distress. But he begins to take hope again in the thought of God's past deeds for His people in the Exodus. So every Christian in times of long-lasting trial can pray: God has redeemed me, He will do so again. (Used on Quinquagesima).

I will recall the deeds of the Lord,
I will remember Your wonders of old:
I will tell over all Your works
and meditate on Your acts.

How holy, O God, is Your way,
what god so great as our God?
You, the God Who works marvels,
You made Your strength known among the nations:
By Your arm You redeemed Your people,
the sons of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw You, O God,

the waters saw You and trembled, the waves rose high; The clouds poured down their waters,

the heavens gave voice, Your arrows flew onward, Your thunder resounded in the whirlwind,

lightnings flashed out on the world, the earth trembled and shook:

Your way was on the sea, O Lord,

Your paths over the great waters, no footsteps of Yours could be found!
You led Your people like a flock,
by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

# THE BLESSINGS OF GOD: THE INGRATITUDE OF THE PEOPLE

O my people, hear my teaching, give heed to the words from my lips: I will open my mouth in a parable, I will recall the mystery of days past. What we have heard and been taught, what our fathers have told us, We shall not hide from their sons: we shall tell the generation to come The praises of the Lord and His power, and the wonders that He wrought: For He gave a command to Jacob, and He established the law in Israel, That His commands to our fathers should be made known to their sons, That the generation to come, the children to be born, should rise up in their turn, and tell their sons:

Psalm 77. "A maskil. Of Asaph." The lesson of this meditation on the history of Israel is that we owe God obedience and trust in return for the great things He has done for us. As He delivered His people from slavery in Egypt by all the miracles described in this Psalm, so He has delivered us from slavery to the devil by His Passion and Death, applied to us at Baptism. As He kept His people alive in the desert by bringing water from rocks, showering manna and quails on them for food, so He feeds us with the true Bread from heaven. As He forgave their repeated infidelities, so He has forgiven ours. Let the lesson not be lost on us! (Quoted in Matt. 13:55; John 6:31; used on Quinquagesima, Easter Week, Pentecost Week).

That they should put their trust in God, not forgetting the great deeds of God, but observing His commands:

That they should not be like their fathers, a rebellious race and stubborn,

A race whose heart was not true,
whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Ephraim's sons, so skilled with the bow, they turned their backs on the day of battle:

They did not keep God's covenant, they refused to walk in His law:

They forgot His great deeds, and the signs He had shown them.

In their fathers' sight He had wrought wonders, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Tanis:

He cleft the sea and led them through, He heaped up the waters like a mound:

By day He led them with a cloud, by night with a flame of fire:

He cleft the rocks in the desert, He gave them water as if in floods:

He brought forth streams from the rock, the waters came down in torrents.

But yet more they sinned against Him, and in the desert offended the Most High:

They doubted God in their hearts, in asking the food for their craving:

Yes, they spoke against God,

"Can God spread a table" they said, "In the desert?"

"See, He smote the rock, and the waters gushed out, the streams overflowed:

Now can He also find bread, can He give meat to His people?" The Lord heard, and His anger was kindled, kindled like fire against Jacob,

His wrath mounted against Israel:

For they did not put their faith in God, did not trust in His saving power.

Yet He commanded the clouds from on high,

He opened the doors of heaven:

He rained manna on them for food, bread of the heavens He gave them:

Each one ate the bread of the strong,

He sent them their fill of food:

He made the east wind rise in the heavens,

His power guided the south wind,

He rained on them meat like dust-clouds, winged birds like the sands of the sea:

In the midst of their camp it fell, all around their dwellings:

So they ate and were filled, He fulfilled all their desires.

But they had scarcely sated their hunger,

the food was yet in their mouths,

when God's wrath rose up against them:

He slew the strongest among them,

He struck down the youth of Israel.

But yet they sinned again,

they believed not in His wonders:

And He cut short their days like a breath, their years with sudden ruin:

When He slew them, then they remembered Him, once again they looked for God, their deliverer:

They remembered God, their Rock, the Most High, their Savior.

But they flattered Him with their mouths, with their tongues they lied:

Their hearts were not true to Him, they were unfaithful to His covenant.

And He in pity forgave them and did not destroy, many times He turned away His wrath:

He did not arouse all His anger,

but remembered, "They are flesh, a mere breath that goes by and does not return."

How often they rebelled against Him in the desert, offended Him in the wilderness!

Again and again they tempted God,

gave pain to the Holy One of Israel: They did not remember His hand,

nor the day when He saved them from their foe:

When He wrought His signs in Egypt, His wonders in the field of Tanis:

When He turned their 1 rivers into blood, and their streams, that they might not drink:

When He sent swarms of flies to consume them, and frogs to lay them waste:

When He gave up their crops to the caterpillar, the fruit of their work to the locust:

When He killed their vines with hailstones, their sycamores with frost:

He delivered their cattle to the hail, their flocks to bolts of lightning:

He sent against them the heat of His anger, wrath and rage and distress,

a host of messengers of evil:

He gave free rein to His anger,

not saving them from death, delivering their beasts to the plague:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> "They" here and in the following six verses refers to the Egyptians, not the Israelites.

<sup>153</sup> 

He smote every first-born in Egypt, every oldest son in the tents of Cham.

Like sheep He led out His people, in the desert He guided them like a flock,

He led them out to safety, unafraid, while the sea covered up their foes:

To His holy land He brought them,

to the mountains won by His right hand:

He drove out the heathen before them,

and by lot awarded them their heritage, He settled the tribes of Israel in their tents.

But they tried Him and provoked Him, God most High, not keeping His commandments:

They turned back and betrayed Him,

as did their fathers,

like warped bows, they missed their mark.

With hill-shrines they provoked Him, made Him jealous with their idols:

God heard, and burned with wrath, violently He rejected Israel:

He left the dwelling at Silo, the tent where He dwelt among men:

His strength He gave up to bondage,

His glory to the hands of the foe: His own people He delivered to the sword,

enraged with His own inheritance:

Fire devoured their young men, no marriage-song for their daughters:

Their priests fell by the sword, their widows did not weep.

Then God awoke as from sleep, like a wine-drunk warrior, shouting:

He struck His foes unaware, left them to lasting dishonor: He rejected the tent of Joseph,

He chose not the tribe of Ephraim:
But He chose the tribe of Juda,

Mount Sion that He loved:
Like high heaven He built His sanctuary,
like the earth that He founded forever,
And he chose David, His servant,
He took him away from the sheepfolds:
From the care of sucking ewes, He called him
to shepherd Jacob His people, Israel His heritage:
With a true heart he fed them,
with skilled hands, he led them.

# LAMENT OVER THE DESTRUCTION OF IERUSALEM

O God, the heathen have invaded Your heritage, they have defiled Your holy temple,

made Jerusalem a heap of ruins:

They have given Your servants' bodies

as food to the birds of the air.

the flesh of Your saints to the beasts of the field:

They have poured out blood like water all round

Jerusalem,

and there is none to dig a grave:
We have become a taunt to our neighbors,
derided and scorned by those around us.

How long, O Lord, will You be angry? Your jealousy burn on like a fire?

Turn Your wrath on the heathen who know You not, on the kingdoms who invoke not Your name:

For they have devoured Jacob,

they have laid waste his dwelling:

Do not hold against us the sins of our fathers, speed Your pity to meet us, for we have been brought low.

Help us, O God of our salvation,

for the glory of Your name:

for the sake of Your name, free us, forgive our sins:

Psalm 78. "A Psalm. Of Asaph." The Psalmist mourns over the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple by Nabuchodonosor, and implores God to avenge His own honor. We may pray this Psalm for the Church, persecuted in so many places throughout the world, and also for those baptized 'temples of the living God' who have lost the faith, whose souls have been devastated by the Enemy of mankind. (Used on Ash Wednesday, Lent, Feasts of Martyrs).

Why should the nations say:

"Where is their God?"

May they learn, while we look on.

May they learn, while we look on, how You avenge the shedding of Your servants' blood.

Let the sighing of the captive come before You, by the might of Your arm, save those condemned to death:

Repay sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbors, the scorn wherewith they have scorned You, O Lord!

And we, Your people, the flock of Your pasture, we will give thanks to You forever:

From generation to generation, we will proclaim Your praise.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>The many folds in the front of the robes worn in Biblical times were used as men use pockets today, as places to put money and other things.

### "RESTORE YOUR VINE THAT HAS BEEN LAID WASTE"

O Shepherd of Israel, hear us, You Who guide Joseph like a flock: Enthroned on the cherubim, shine out on Ephraim, Benjamin and Manasses: Rouse up Your power, come to save us.

O God, restore us, let Your face shine out on us that we may be saved!

How long, O Lord of hosts, will Your wrath burn on while Your people pray?

For bread You have given them tears, and tears overflowing for drink:

You have set us at odds with our neighbors, our enemies mock at us.

O God of hosts, restore us, let Your face shine out on us that we may be saved!

From Egypt You took a vine, You drove out the heathen to replant it: You made ready the ground for it, it took root and filled the land:

Psalm 79. "For the leader. According to Lilium legis. Of Asaph. A Psalm." The Psalmist, at a time of great calamity for the northern kingdom, implores God's help and describes his people's sufferings. He reminds God of all His past care for His vine, Israel, and of its present sad state, and implores God to come to its aid, promising to serve Him faithfully in the future. We pray this Psalm for the grace of repentance and greater fidelity to God for the whole Christian people; for God's continued aid to His true vine, the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church.

The mountains were covered by its shadow, the cedars of God 1 by its branches:

Its leaves reached to the Sea, 2 its shoots to the River.

Why have You broken down its fences?

all who go by pluck its fruit,

The wild boar tramples it down,

cattle use it for pasture.

O God of hosts, return,

look down from heaven and see, and visit this vine:

Protect it, for Your right hand planted it,
this shoot that You made so strong.

At the menace of Your face, may they perish,
those who would burn it or cut it down:
Let Your hand rest on the man of Your own choosing,
on the son of man whom You have strengthened
for Your service.

We will turn away from You no more You will give us life, and we shall invoke Your name.

O Lord of hosts, restore us, let Your face shine out on us that we may be saved!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>I.e., the great cedars of Lebanon, so impressive as to seem to have been planted by God himself.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> The sea for the Palestinians was the Mediterranean; the river, the Euphrates.

## HYMN AND WARNING FOR A SOLEMN FEAST

Shout with joy to God our Strength,
acclaim the God of Jacob:

Take up the song and strike the timbrel,
the sweet-sounding harp and the lyre:

Sound the trumpet at the new moon,
at the full moon, on our feast-day.

For it is a decree in Israel,
a precept of the God of Jacob.

He made this a law for Joseph,
when He went out against the land of Egypt.

I heard a speech that I had not known:
"I freed his shoulder of the burden,
His hands were loosed from the basket,
in distress you called Me and I freed you.

Psalm 80. "For the choirmaster. According to Torcularia. Of Asaph." This Psalm seems to have been sung at some solemn liturgical festival such as the Passover, or, as many authorities believe, the Feast of Tabernacles. The first part is a liturgical hymn inviting the people to celebrate the feast instituted by God; the second a solemn warning in which God Himself is heard to speak, reminding His people of how He freed them from Egypt, how He gave them the law to worship no other god, how they have disobeyed Him in the past: But if they will only hear, He will even now give them His protection and blessings. We Christians have been freed from servitude to the devil, brought into the Church, fed with "finest wheat" in the Holy Eucharist. Let us be obedient to God's voice and walk in His ways. (Used in Masses of Low Sunday, Pentecost, Corpus Christi).

I answered you with the voice of thunder,
I tested you at the waters of Meriba.¹
Listen, My people, as I give warning,
O Israel, if you would but hear Me!
You should have among you no strange god,
to no alien god give your worship.
It is I the Lord Who am Your God,
Who led you out of the land of Egypt:
Open wide your mouth,
and I will fill it.

"But My people did not listen to My voice,
Israel would not obey Me:
Then I left them to their own hard hearts,
they walked by their own will.
Oh that my people would hear Me,
that Israel would walk in My ways!
How quickly would I crush their enemies,

turn My hand against their foes:
Those who hate the Lord would flatter Him,
and forever their terror would endure.

But Israel I would feed with the richest wheat, I would fill him with honey from the rock."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Meriba (meaning 'contest,' 'dispute') recalls Num. 20:2-13, Exod. 17:1-7 and Deut. 33:8. cf. Ps. 94:8.

### THE FATE OF WICKED JUDGES

God rises up in the divine council,

He judges in the midst of the gods.

"How long will you render false judgments and favor the cause of the wicked?

Give justice to the oppressed and the orphan, be just to the poor and the afflicted,

Free the oppressed and the needy, save them from the hand of the wicked."

They do not know nor understand,

they go about in darkness:

all the foundations of the earth are shaken.

I have said: "You are gods, you are all sons of the Most High: Nevertheless you shall die like men, like any prince you shall fall."

Arise, O God, judge the earth, for by right You possess all the nations!

Psalm 81. "A Psalm. Of Asaph." The Psalmist rebukes with God's own words those judges and rulers who do not respect true justice. In this Psalm, 'gods' is used to mean human rulers who have been given the god-like authority of judging and ruling. This Psalm is a warning to all those holding any kind of responsibility or authority, including that great responsibility given by Baptism which made us 'sons of the Most High.' We can pray this Psalm for the coming of Christ, to Whom the Father has given all judgment. (Quoted in John 10:34).

### PRAYER AGAINST AN ENEMY ALLIANCE

O God, do not keep silent,
be still, be not unmoved, O God!

For see, Your foes raise a tumult,
those who hate You raise their heads:

They plot together against Your people,
they scheme against those You protect.

"Come," they say, "Let us cut them off
from among the nations,
let Israel's name be remembered no more!"

They conspire with one heart,
they league themselves against You:
The tents of Edom and Ismaelites,
Moab and the sons of Agar,
Geval, Ammon and Amalec,
Philistia and the Tyrians:
Even the Assyrians are with them,
they lend a strong arm to the sons of Lot.

Do for them as You did for Madian and Sisara, as for Yabin at the brook of Cison:
They were destroyed at Endor,
they became dung for the earth:

Psalm 82. "A song. A Psalm. Of Asaph." The Psalmist calls God's attention to the great coalition of enemies coming against His people, implores Him to destroy them as He has destroyed other enemies in the past, so that they may come to acknowldge God. We pray this Psalm for the Church, threatened by the forces of evil in so many ways today; and for the grace of courage for ourselves in the face of temptations. (Used on Sexagesima).

Treat their princes like Oreb and Zeb, like Zebee and Salmana, all their leaders, Those who dare to say: "Let us seize the lands of God!"

O my God, treat them like storm-driven leaves, like chaff in the wind!

As fire burns up the forest, as a flame sets the mountains ablaze,

So pursue them with Your storm, so terrify them with Your tempest:

With shame cover their faces, that they may seek, O Lord, Your name:

May they be ashamed, put to rout forever, may they be confounded and perish:

That they may know You, Whose name is the Lord, You alone, Most High over all the earth!

#### DESIRE FOR GOD'S TEMPLE

How lovely is Your dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts!
My soul is longing and sighing
for the courts of the Lord:
My heart and my flesh cry for joy
to the living God:
Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest to shelter her young,—
Your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God!

Blessed are they who dwell in Your house, O Lord, without ceasing they praise You:
Blessed the man who finds his strength in You, when he sets his heart on the sacred journey:
Going through the dry valley, they make it a spring, the first rain clothes it with blessings:
They go from strength to strength, they shall see the God of Gods in Sion.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer, hearken, O God of Jacob!O God, our shield, behold, look on the face of Your Anointed!

Psalm 83. "For the choirmaster, according to Torcularia. Of the sons of Core. A Psalm." This seems to have been one of the hymns sung by the pilgrims coming up to Jerusalem for a great feast. We pray this Psalm for converts coming into the Church; to express our own longing to live forever in the house of God in heaven. (Used in Feast of the Holy Family, Masses of the third Sunday of Lent, Dedication of a Church, Preparation for Mass).

Far better one day in Your courts, than a thousand elsewhere:

Far better to lie at the threshold of my God's house, than to dwell in the tents of the wicked:

For the Lord God is a sun and a shield, the Lord bestows grace and glory:

The Lord denies nothing good to those who walk in innocence.

O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who gives his trust to You!

### "OUR SALVATION IS NEAR AT HAND"

You have been kind, O Lord, to Your land,
You have restored the fortunes of Jacob;
You have taken away the guilt of Your people,
You have covered all their sins:
You have reined in all Your anger,
turned away from the heat of Your wrath.

Restore us, O God, our Savior,
cease Your displeasure against us:
Will You be angry with us forever,
and extend Your wrath to all generations?
Will You not restore us to life,
and let Your people have joy in You?
Show us, O Lord, Your mercy,
and grant us Your salvation!

I will hear the words of the Lord God, for indeed He speaks of peace To His people, to His faithful, those who turn to Him in their hearts.

Psalm 84. "For the choirmaster. Of the sons of Core. A Psalm." This Psalm describes the desires of the Jewish exiles after their return to Judea. They had come back to their own country, but were oppressed with great difficulties of all kinds. The Psalmist thanks God for the return, prays Him to complete the work of restoration, and prophesies the coming of the Messiah to bring justice and salvation. We too have been forgiven and restored to God's grace by Baptism; but in the world we are surrounded by trials. So we pray this Psalm for the completion of God's work in us, for the final coming of Christ to make all things new. (Used in many Masses during Advent, preparation for Mass).

Yes, His salvation is near at hand

for those who fear Him,

that the Glory may dwell in our land:

Mercy comes to meet truth, justice embraces peace:

Truth springs up from the earth, justice looks down from heaven:

The Lord will grant His blessing, and our earth will give its fruit:

Justice will walk before Him, and salvation follow in His footsteps.

## PRAYER OF A SERVANT OF GOD IN THE MIDST OF TRIALS

Hear, O Lord, answer me,
for I am afflicted and poor:
Guard my soul, for I am faithful to You,
save Your servant whose hope is in You:
You are my God, have mercy on me, O Lord,
for to You do I cry all the day:
Give joy to the soul of Your servant,
for to You, O Lord, I lift up my soul!
For You, O Lord, are good and kind,
full of mercy to all who invoke You:
Hearken, O Lord, to my prayer,
hear the sound of my pleading:
In the day of my trouble, I cry to You,
for You will answer me.

Among the gods, O Lord, none is like You, and there are no works like Yours:

All the nations that You have made

will come to adore You,

to give glory, O Lord, to Your name:
For You are great and You work marvels,
You alone are God.

Teach me, O Lord, Your way
that I may walk in Your truth,
guide my heart that I may fear Your name:
I will praise You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and forever give glory to Your name:

Psalm 85. "A prayer. Of David." (Used on the Feast of the Holy Name, Preparation for Mass, Visitation of the Sick).

For great has been Your mercy;

You have freed my soul from the depths of hell.

Proud men have risen against me, O God,

a band of strong men have sought my life, they do not keep You before their eyes:

But You, O Lord, are a God of mercy and kindness, slow to anger, rich in kindness and truth.

Turn to me,

have pity on me,

Grant Your strength to Your servant, save the son of Your handmaid:

Give me a token of Your favor:

let those who hate me see and be ashamed,

For You, O Lord,

will help me and console me.

#### SION, THE MOTHER OF ALL PEOPLES

The Lord loves His foundation on the holy mountains, He loves the gates of Sion more

than all Jacob's dwellings:

Glorious things are said of you, O city of God!

I tell of Egypt and Babylon,
as among those who give Me worship:
See Philistia Tyr and the people of Ethior

See, Philistia, Tyr and the people of Ethiopia, these were born there.

And they shall say of Sion: "One and all were born in her,

the Most High Himself has established her."
The Lord writes in the book of the peoples,
"It is there that they were born!"

And they sing as they dance in chorus, "My every fountain-head is in you!"

Psalm 86. "Of the sons of Core. A Psalm. A song." This Psalm is a prophetic vision of the Sion of the Messias, the homeland, the mother of all peoples, the center of all good. This prophecy is fulfilled in the true city of God, the Church.

## LAMENT AND PRAYER OF A MAN IN GREAT AFFLICTION

O Lord, my God, by day I cry out, by night I lament before You: Let my prayer come into Your presence, give heed to my crying!

Drenched is my soul with evils, my life draws near to sheol: Counted amongst those who go down to the pit, I am like a man with no strength: I have my bed among the dead men, like the slain who lie in the grave, Those whom You remember no more, who are cut off from Your care: You have set me down in a deep pit, in the darkness, in the abyss: Your wrath weighs heavy on me, all Your waves overwhelm me: You have taken away My friends, made me a thing of horror: I am shut in, I cannot escape.

Psalm 87. "A song. A Psalm. Of the sons of Core. For the choirmaster. According to Mahalat. For singing. A maskil of Heman the Ezrahite." The Psalmist, afflicted with some grave disease, persists in confiding to God his pain and loneliness, as we should do also in times of great trial and depression when any other effort of mind or soul seems impossible. Let us pray this Psalm in union with Our Lord in His Agony in the garden, for all those who are suffering. (Used on Ember Wednesday in Lent, Pentecost Week).

My eyes are worn with sorrow,

I call on You, Lord, all the day,

I stretch out my hands to You:

Do You work marvels for the dead, can the shades arise and praise You?

Is Your mercy proclaimed in the tomb,

Your faithfulness in the world below?

Are Your wonders made known in the darkness, Your justice in the land of oblivion?

But to You, O Lord, do I cry,

in the morning my prayer goes to meet You:

Why, Lord, do You repel my soul, why hide Your Face from me?

Poor, near to death from my childhood,

I have borne Your terrors, I am dazed with them:

Your anger has swept over me

and Your terrors have overwhelmed me:

They have surrounded me like water, all the day, closing in all around me:

You have taken away from me friends and neighbors, the dark is my only comrade.

#### APPEAL TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

I will sing forever the mercies of the Lord, through all generations

my mouth will announce Your faithfulness:

For I said: Your grace stands firm forever,
Your faithfulness is founded in heaven.
"I have made a covenant with My Chosen,
to David, My servant, I swore:
'I will establish your line forever,
set up your throne for all ages.'"

The heavens, O Lord, proclaim Your wonders, the assembly of the saints, Your fidelity:

For who in the skies can compare with the Lord, among the sons of God who is like to the Lord?

God is to be feared in the council of the saints, great, and more to be feared than any round Him:

Lord God of Hosts, Who is like unto You,

You are mighty, and Your faithfulness surrounds

Psalm 88. "A maskil. Of Ethan the Ezrahite." The Psalmist, composing probably at the beginning of the exile, compares the present sad condition of the house of David with God's magnificent promises made to David himself; and prays God to remember these promises and to come to the aid of the king, His Anointed. God's promises to David are completely fulfilled only in Christ, Whose power and glory will not be manifested to all mankind until the Last Day. Let us pray this Psalm for the Church on earth, Christ's Mystical Body, so often seemingly overcome by the forces of evil. (Quoted in Acts 13:22. Used in third Mass of Christmas, the Circumcision, Feast of Christ the King, Martyr-Bishops, Martyrs, Confessors).

You master the tide of the sea, when its waves rise high, You calm them: You struck down Rahab and slew him,<sup>1</sup>

You have scattered Your enemies

by the might of Your arm:

The heavens are Yours, and the sea,

You founded the earth and what fills it:

You created the north and the south,

Thabor and Hermon shout for joy in Your name:

Mighty is Your arm,

Your hand is strong, Your right hand held high:

Justice and right are Your throne's foundations, mercy and truth go before You.

That people is blessed who know the glad cry,<sup>2</sup> who walk, O Lord, in the light of Your face:

They rejoice all the day in Your name, by Your justice they prevail:

For You are the splendor of our strength, by Your favor our head is held high:

For the Lord is our shield, the Holy One of Israel our king.

Once You spoke in a vision, saying to Your faithful:

"I have set a crown on the head of a warrior,
I have chosen one from amongst the people:

I have sought out David, My servant,

I have consecrated him with holy oil:

My hand will always be with him,

My arm will give him strength.

No foe shall surprise him,

no wicked man oppress him:

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Rahab: A mythical monster personifying the enemies of God's people, perhaps specifically Egypt.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> In the ritual of Jewish worship.

I will crush his enemies before him, strike down those who hate him:
My truth and My grace will be with him, in My name will he lift up his head:
I set his hand on the Sea, and his right hand on the rivers.

He will cry to Me, 'You are my Father,
my God and the Rock of my salvation!'
Yes, I will make him the first-born,
the highest among the kings of the earth:
My kindness to him will endure forever,
My covenant with him will be faithful:
I shall found his line forever,
his throne as the days of heaven.

If his sons forsake My Law,
and walk no more in My precepts:

If they profane My statutes,
not keeping My commandments,

With a rod I will visit their sin,
and their transgression with stripes,
But I will not take away My kindness,
I will not deny My faithfulness:

I will not profane My covenant,
not alter the word of My lips:
By My holiness I have sworn it,
'I will never be false to David:
His line shall endure forever,
his throne like the sun in My presence,
Like the moon, that is established forever,
a faithful witness in heaven.'"

But You have cast him off and rejected him, You have been angry with Your anointed: You have spurned Your pact with Your servant, cast his crown to the ground and defiled it:

You have broken down his walls, laid his strongholds in ruins:

All who pass by him, despoil him, he is the laughing-stock of his neighbors:

You have given a free hand to his enemies, gladdened all his foes:

You have blunted the edge of his sword, and not upheld him in battle:

His brightness You have dimmed, cast his throne down to the ground:

You have shortened the days of his youth, and wrapped him about with shame.

How long, O Lord? will You hide forever? will Your wrath burn on like fire?

Remember how brief is my life, how frail You have made all the sons of Adam:

What man can live on and not see death, who can deliver his soul from the power of sheel?

Where are Your mercies, Lord, Your age-old mercies, sworn by Your faithfulness to David?

Think how Your servants are taunted—
how I bear in my breast all the insults of the people,

The insults which Your enemies, Lord, have cast, which they have cast at the steps of Your anointed.

BLESSED FOREVER BE THE LORD. AMEN. AMEN.

# FOURTH BOOK OF PSALMS

### THE ETERNAL GOD. MAN'S REFUGE

For we are consumed by Your wrath,
dismayed by Your anger:
You have placed our misdeeds in Your sight,
our secret sins in the light of Your face:
Yes, all our days have gone by in Your wrath,
we have spent our years like a sigh:
But seventy years is our life-span,
ten more, perhaps, for the strongest:

Psalm 89. "A prayer of Moses, the man of God." This Psalm beautifully describes the situation of the Israelites near the end of Moses' life, when they had been wandering in the desert for nearly forty years, and none of those who originally left Egypt were to be allowed to enter the Promised Land on account of their sins. Let us pray this Psalm for the grace of true 'wisdom of heart' to use all the days of our brief lives for the glory of God and the spreading of Christ's kingdom. (Quoted in Heb. 1:22; used on Ember Saturday in Lent).

For the most part, they are frustration and toil, they pass quickly and we fly away:
Who knows the power of Your wrath,
Your anger toward those who should fear You?

Teach us to number our days,
that we may gain wisdom of heart.

Return to us, Lord,—how soon?
take pity on Your servants:

Fill us quickly with Your mercy,
that we may exult all our days and be glad:

Fill us with joy for the days when You afflicted us,
for the years wherein we saw evil:

Let Your work be seen by Your servants,
and Your glory by their children:

Let Your kindness, O Lord our God,
come down upon us,

And prosper the work of our hands for us,
yes, prosper the work of our hands.

# GOD MOST HIGH, PROTECTOR OF THE JUST

You who live in the shelter of the Most High, who dwell in the shadow of the Almighty, Say to the Lord, "My refuge and my stronghold, my God in Whom I trust!"

For He will free you from the hunter's net,
from the plague that kills:
He will shelter you with His pinions,
under His wings you will take refuge,
His faithfulness is a shield and guard.
You will not fear the terrors of night,
nor the arrow flying by day,
Nor the sickness spreading in the darkness,
nor the plague that lays waste at noon-day.
Though a thousand fall at your side

and ten thousand at your right, it shall not come near to you,
You need but look with your own eyes,
to see the wage of sinners.

For your refuge is the Lord, you have made the Most High your stronghold:

Psalm 90. This beautiful Psalm of true confidence in God is traditionally a night prayer (Sunday and Monastic Compline). It is also used as our watchword during Lent; the devil tried to quote it to Our Lord during His temptation in the desert to incite Him to presumption;—the Church uses it to praise Our Lord for His trust in His Father and to ask for courage for us in our Lenten prayers and penances. (Quoted in Matt. 4:16; Luke 4:10-12; used in first Sunday of Lent. Visitation of Sick).

No evil shall befall you,
no scourge come near your tent:
For He has entrusted you to His angels,
to guard you in all your ways:
They shall lift you on their hands
lest you stumble on a stone:
You shall tread on the lion and viper,
trample down the lion and dragon.

"Since he clings to Me, I will deliver him,
I will protect him, for he knows My name.
He will call Me and I will hear him,
I will be with him in trouble:
I will rescue him,
and give him glory:
I will content him with length of days,
and I will show him my salvation."

# PRAISE OF THE DIVINE ARTIST, CREATOR AND GOVERNOR OF MANKIND

It is good to give praise to the Lord,
to sing praise to Your name, O Most High!
To proclaim Your mercy each morning,
Your faithfulness through the night,
On the ten strings of the harp,
with the concord of the lyre!
For You gladden me, O Lord, with Your deeds,
I cry out for joy at Your handiwork:

How great, O Lord, are Your deeds,
how deep Your thoughts!
The senseless man does not know,
the fool perceives not these things:
Though the wicked flourish like grass,
though all evil-doers prosper,
They are doomed to perish forever,
while You, Lord, are enthroned on high:

For behold Your enemies, O Lord, for behold
Your enemies perish,
scattered all those who do evil.
You have raised me high like the wild bull's horn,
You have perfumed me with sweet oil:
My eyes look down on my enemies,
my ears are glad, hearing
of my evil enemies' downfall.

Psalm 91. "A Psalm. A song. For the sabbath day." We can pray this Psalm in praise of God's providence, as shown in the whole course of history and also in our own lives. (Used on Septuagesima, Vigils of Apostles, Feasts of Doctors, Confessors).

The good man flourishes like a palm-tree, he grows tall like a cedar of Lebanon: Planted in the house of the Lord, they flourish in the courts of our God: In old age they shall still be fruitful, green-growing, full of vigor, To proclaim that the Lord is true, in Him, my rock, there is no injustice.

# THE LORD IS KING OF THE WHOLE WORLD

The Lord reigns, He is clothed in majesty,
the Lord is robed in power, armed with strength:
He has made the whole world secure,
not to be moved:
Your throne was set up from of old,
eternally, You are!

The waves lift up, O Lord, the waves lift up their voice, the waves lift up their thunder:

Mightier than great waters roaring,

mightier than seas breaking,

mighty is the Lord on high!

Your promises are worthy of all trust, holiness, O Lord, ever befits Your dwelling.

Psalm 92. "The king reigns!", that is, begins to reign and will continue to do so, was the solemn acclamation by which a new king of Israel was hailed (2 Sam. 15:10). So we can pray this Psalm in praise of Christ the King, risen from the dead, gloriously reigning at the right hand of the Father. (Quoted in Heb. 1:12; used in second Mass of Christmas, Sunday in Octave of Christmas, Vigil of Epiphany, Feasts of Doctors).

# APPEAL TO GOD, THE JUST JUDGE

O God of vengeance, the Lord,
God of vengeance, shine forth!

Judge of the earth, arise,
give to the proud their wages.

How long, O Lord, shall the wicked,
how long shall the wicked rejoice?

How long shall they babble on, talk with insolence,
how long go about boasting, these evildoers?

Lord, they trample down Your people, they lay waste Your inheritance: They murder the widow and the stranger, they slay the fatherless: And they say: "the Lord sees not, the God of Jacob pays no heed!"

Understand, you senseless men,
you fools, when will you be wise?

Does He Who fashioned ears not hear,
He Who made eyes, not see?

Who admonishes the nations, shall He not punish,—
He Who teaches mankind wisdom?

The Lord knows men's thoughts,
that they are foolish.

Psalm 93. The Psalmist is filled with just anger against the wicked who oppress the poor and helpless, and calls God to see and punish them. In the second part, he praises God's care of His Own, knowing that He will uphold the good and punish the wicked. We can pray this Psalm that God will bring about true social justice and true peace, and that He will protect those who are striving to achieve them.

Blessed is the man whom You teach, O Lord, whom You instruct in Your law,
To give him peace in days of evil,
till the pit be dug for the wicked.
For the Lord will not leave His people,
not abandon His own inheritance:
Judgment shall again serve justice,
and all the true-hearted will follow it.

Against the wicked, who rises to defend me?
against evil-doers, who comes to my aid?
Had the Lord not been my help,
long since my soul had dwelt in the place of silence:
When I think: "My foot is stumbling!"
Your grace upholds me, O Lord:
When cares come thronging in my heart,
Your consolations bring joy to my soul.

Will You ally Yourself with the court of injustice that does wrong in the guise of law?

They attack the soul of the good man, and condemn innocent blood?

But the Lord, He is my stronghold, my God is my rock of refuge:

He will turn their own sin against them, by their own crimes He will destroy them:

He will destroy them

He, the Lord our God.

# INVITATION TO PRAISE GOD, AND TO BE OBEDIENT

Come, let us sing to the Lord, shout with joy to the rock of our salvation: Let us come into His presence with praise, rejoice before Him with singing.

For the Lord is a great God,
a great King above all the gods:
In His hand are the depths of the earth,
His are the mountain heights:
The sea is His, for He made it,
and the dry land, formed by His hands.

Come, let us bow down and adore,
let us kneel to the Lord Who made us!

For He is our God,
and we are the people of His pasture,
the flock at His hand.

O that today you would hear His voice,
"Do not harden your heart as at Meriba,
as on the day of Massa in the desert,"
When your fathers tried Me,
they tested Me though they had seen My deeds.

Psalm 94. The Psalmist invites us to praise God, King and Creator of the whole earth, the Shepherd of His people, whom we should obey lest He reject us as He did the Israelites in the desert. (Quoted in Heb. 3:7-11, 15; 4, 3, 5, 7; used daily to open the Divine Office).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Meriba literally means, the "contention"—the place where the Israelites quarreled with God;—and Massa, the "testing" where they put Him to the test. See Exod. 17:7; Num. 20:13.

I grew weary of that race through forty years, and I said: "a people of wandering heart, they do not know My ways."

Then I swore in My wrath:
"Never shall they enter My rest!"

### PRAISE TO THE LORD, OUR KING

Sing to the Lord a new song, sing to the Lord, all you lands: Sing to the Lord, bless His name, announce His salvation day after day: Among the heathen tell His glory, His marvels to every people.

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, to be feared more than all the gods:

The gods of the heathen are nothings, but the Lord—He made the heavens:

Glory and majesty stand before Him, strength and splendor are in His sanctuary.

Declare to the Lord, you families of nations,
declare to the Lord His glory and strength:
declare to the Lord the glory of His name:
Offer sacrifice and come into His courts:
worship the Lord in holy attire,
Tremble before Him, all the earth!
say among the nations: The Lord is King:
He has set the earth firm, not to be moved,
He rules the peoples with justice.

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice, the sea thunder with all its waves:

Psalm 95. The Psalmist sees the Lord coming at the end of time to establish the messianic kingdom. Let us pray it that Our Lord may hasten His return on the Last Day, "Amen, come, Lord Jesus!" (Quoted in 1 Cor. 8:4; used in first Mass of Christmas, Easter Week, Easter season, Vigil of the Ascension).

Let the fields be glad, and all their creatures, all the trees of the wood shout for joy Before the Lord, for He comes, for He comes to rule the earth:

He will judge the world with justice, and the peoples with His truth.

# THE LORD IS KING, HE WILL CONFOUND FALSE GODS AND EXALT GOOD MEN

The Lord is king, let the earth rejoice,
let all the islands be glad!

Clouds surround Him, and darkness,
right and justice uphold His throne:

A fire goes before Him
and consumes the whole ring of His foes.

His lightnings flash round the world,
the earth sees and trembles:

The mountains melt like wax in the Lord's presence,
in the presence of the Lord of all the world:

The heavens proclaim His justice

and all peoples see His glory.

All those who serve statues are confounded,
those who give glory to idols,
all the gods bow down before Him:
Sion hears and is glad,
the cities of Juda rejoice, O Lord, in Your judgments:
For You, O Lord, are high over all the earth,
exalted far above every god.

The Lord loves those who hate evil,

He guards the souls of His faithful,

saves them from the hands of the wicked:

Psalm 96. A hymn hailing the coming of the Kingdom of God, already establishing in the Church and continually 'coming' to mankind, to shine out in perfection and glory when Our Lord returns on the Last Day. (Quoted in Heb. 1:6; used on Sundays after Epiphany).

For the good man, light is rising, and joy for the right of heart: Rejoice, good men, in the Lord, and praise His holy name!

# THE LORD, THE CONQUEROR

Sing to the Lord a new song,
for He has wrought marvels:
His right hand has won Him victory
and His holy arm:
The Lord has made known His salvation,
revealed His justice in the sight of nations:
He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness
to the house of Israel:
All the ends of the earth have seen

the salvation of our God!

Sing with joy to the Lord, all the earth,
be glad, rejoice and sing:
Sing to the Lord with the harp,
with the lyre and the sound of music:
With trumpets and sounding horns,
sing with joy in the Lord's presence, He the King.

Let the ocean thunder with all its waves, the world and all who dwell there,
The rivers clap their hands, the mountains shout together with joy Before the Lord, for He comes, for He comes to rule the earth.
He will rule the world with justice and the peoples with right judgment.

Psalm 97. "A Psalm." Another Psalm rejoicing in the glorious coming of Christ. (Used in third Mass of Christmas, Circumcision, Easter Week, Easter season).

### THE LORD, THE HOLY KING

The Lord is King,
let the peoples tremble:
He is enthroned on the cherubim,
let the earth be shaken:
How great is the Lord in Sion,
and high over all the peoples!
Let them praise Your name, great and dread,
holy is that Name.

This mighty King loves justice,
You have established the right,
given justice and true judgment to Jacob:
Praise the Lord our God,
fall down before His footstool, for it is holy.

Moses and Aaron are among His priests,
Samuel among those who invoke His name:
They cried to the Lord and He answered:
He spoke to them in the pillar of cloud:
They heard His commands,
and the law that He gave them:
O Lord our God, You answered them,
You were a God indeed Who forgives,

but a God to avenge their misdeeds.
Extol the Lord our God,
fall down before His holy mountain,
For He is holy,
the Lord our God!

sis on His holiness and His desire to make us holy.

Psalm 98. A Psalm praising God as King, with special empha-

#### PSALM 99

### HYMN ON GOING INTO THE TEMPLE

Sing with joy to the Lord,
all you lands,
Serve the Lord with gladness,
come into His presence rejoicing:
Know that the Lord He is God,
He made us and we are His,
We are His people
and the sheep of His pasture.
Come into His gates with thanksgiving,
into His courts with praise:
Give thanks to Him,
and bless His name:
For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting,
His faithfulness endures
from generation to generation.

Psalm 99. "A Psalm. For thanksgiving." (Used Sunday in Octave of Epiphany, Quinquagesima).

#### THE KING'S DESIRES

I will sing of mercy and justice, to You, O Lord, I will sing: I would walk in the path of the perfect, when will You come to me?

In innocence of heart, I will go about my house, no evil thing set up before my eyes:

I hate the way of the erring it shall have no hold on me:

Far from me be the corrupt of heart, nothing evil in my mind:

He who secretly slanders his neighbor, that man will I destroy:

I will not endure the haughty-eyed, nor the proud of heart:

I have eyes for the faithful men of the land, that they may dwell with me:

He who walks the way of innocence, that man shall serve me.

He who deals in deceit, shall not live in my house:

He who speaks falsehood, shall not stand in my sight.

Day by day I will destroy all the wicked in the land, I will free the city of the Lord, from all who do evil.

Psalm 100. "A Psalm. Of David." This Psalm describes the qualities of integrity and zeal for God that should characterize every ruler. We may pray this Psalm in praise of Christ, the perfect King, and to ask for the grace to enter into His companionship.

## PRAYER IN GREAT AFFLICTION

O Lord, hear my prayer and let my cry rise up to You: Do not hide Your face from me, in the day of my distress, Bend down to hear me, when I call, O answer me swiftly!

For my days vanish like smoke,
my bones burn as in a furnace:
Like dry grass, my heart is withered,
I forget to eat my bread:
From the violence of my lamenting,
I have become only skin and bones—
I am like a pelican in the desert,
like a night-owl among the ruins:
Sleepless, I make my lament
like a lone bird on the housetop.

All day long my foes mock me,
those who once flattered me, now hurl curses:
I eat ashes with my bread,
I mingle my drink with tears:

Psalm 101. "The prayer of a man in affliction, who, wearied out, pours out his anguish before the Lord." In the first part, the Psalmist tells the Lord his sorrows; in the second, he implores God to have mercy on the holy City and on His captive people; in the third, he returns to his own sorrows and implores the eternal God not to cut short his life. This is the Fifth Penitential Psalm. We may pray it for all the members of Christ suffering on earth. (Quoted in Heb. 1:10 ff.; used in Sundays after Epiphany, Holy Week).

Because of Your wrath and Your fury, You have lifted me up and cast me down: My days are like a shadow at sundown, like grass, I wither away.

But You, Lord, You are enthroned forever, and Your name is from age to age: O arise and have pity on Sion, it is the time; the appointed hour for Your mercy! Your servants love her very stones, they feel pity for her ruins. The nations will honor Your name, O Lord, all the kings of the earth, Your glory: When the Lord rebuilds Sion, He will appear in His glory: He will turn to the prayer of the needy, He will not despise their pleading.

Be this written down for the age to come and a people to be created will praise the Lord: For the Lord looked down from His high sanctuary, from heaven He looked down upon earth, To hear the groaning of the captive, to free those condemned to death: That the name of the Lord be announced in Sion, and in Jerusalem, His praise, When the peoples gather together and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

He has worn out my strength on the road, He has shortened my days: I pray: "Do not take me away in the midst of my days, when Your years endure for all ages! Of old You established the earth. the heavens are the work of Your hands:

Though they perish, You will endure:

All things will grow old like a garment, like a robe You will change them

and they will be changed:

But You are the Same, Your years never end:

The sons of Your servants shall dwell in peace, and their line shall live on in Your presence.

## PRAISE OF GOD'S MERCY

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
may all that I am bless His Holy name!
Bless the Lord, O my soul,
forget none of His blessings!
He forgives all your faults,
heals all your diseases,
He redeems your life from destruction,
He crowns you with kindness and mercy:
He fills your life with good things,
renewing your youth like the eagle's.

The Lord renders justice,

He gives judgment for all the oppressed:
He made known His ways to Moses,

His great deeds to the children of Israel.
The Lord is merciful and forgiving,
slow to anger, rich in kindness:
Not always will He war with us,
not be angry with us forever:
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our faults.

For as high as heaven is above the earth, so great is His goodness to those who fear Him: As far as the east is from the west, so far from us does He put our sins.

As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him:

Psalm 102. "Of David." (Used on Ash Wednesday, Lent, Pentecost Week).

For He knows of what we are made, He remembers that we are dust:

Man's days are like those of grass, he grows like the flower in the field:

When the wind sweeps by, he is gone, and his place knows him no more.

But the mercy of the Lord toward those

who fear Him endures forever, and His justice extends to their children's children, For those who keep His covenant, who remember His commands and keep them.

The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, His kingdom rules over all.

Bless the Lord, all you His angels, mighty warriors, carrying out His commands, obedient to His word:

Bless the Lord, all His armies, His servants who do His will: Bless the Lord, all His works,

throughout all His dominions:

O my soul, bless the Lord!

#### PRAISE OF GOD THE CREATOR

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

How great You are, O Lord my God!
You are clothed in splendor and majesty,
with light for Your cloak:
You have unfolded the heavens like a tent-cloth,
built Your high halls on the waters:
You have taken the clouds for a chariot,
You walk on the wings of the wind:
You make the winds Your messengers,
Your servants, fire and flames.

You founded the earth on its bases, so that it will never be moved:
You cover it with the deep, like a robe, the waters stood over the mountains:
At Your threat, they fled away, at Your thunder, they took to flight:
They poured down the mountains,

they settled in the valleys to the place that You had made for them:
You set bounds for them, not to be passed over, lest again they cover the earth.

You made springs gush out and become rivers, flowing between the mountains:

Psalm 103. Let us praise God for His marvellous making and ordering of the universe, which is a preparation and picture of the marvels of His second creation, the Church, to be brought to perfection in the 'new heaven and the new earth' after Our Lord's return. (Quoted in Heb. 1:7; used on Pentecost and Pentecost week).

They give drink for the animals of the fields, the wild donkeys quench their thirst, Nearby nest the birds of the air, among the trees, they pour out their song. From Your high halls You water the mountains, You fill the earth with the fruit of Your works: You make grass spring up for the beasts and green things for man's tending, So that bread may be won from the earth and the wine that rejoices man's heart, Oil to make his face bright, and bread to give his heart strength. Well-watered are the trees of the Lord, the cedars of Lebanon that He planted: There the birds build their nests, the storks have their house in the cypresses: High mountains are for the wild goats,

You have made the moon to mark the seasons, the sun knows the hour of its setting:
You make shadows, and night comes on when all the beasts of the forest prowl about,
When young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God:
At sunrise, they go away,
and lie down to sleep in their lairs:
Then man goes out to his work to toil until the evening.

the rocks offer shelter to the badgers.

How many are Your works, O Lord,

all made with wisdom,
the earth is full of Your creatures!
See the ocean, so great and widespread,
swarming with living creatures unnumbered,
great and small,

Where ships go sailing on, and Leviathan that You made to play there.

All look to You, to give them their food in due season: When You give, they gather it up, when You open Your hand,

they are filled with good things:

When You hide Your face, they are troubled, when You take away their spirit,

they die and return to dust:

When You send out Your spirit, they are created, and You renew the face of the earth.

Glory be the Lord's forever!

may the Lord have joy in His works!

He Who looks down on the earth and it trembles,
Who touches the mountains, and they smoke.

All my life long, I will sing to the Lord
while I have life, I will praise my God:

May my song be pleasing to Him,
while I find my joy in the Lord.

Let sinners be taken from the earth,
let the wicked be no more.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,

Alleluia!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lit. 'breath' and 'spirit' are the same word both in Hebrew and in Latin,—the breath of a living creature being the most evident sign of its being alive and having a spirit. So the Lord takes away the breath or spirit of living things, and sends out His Spirit or 'breath' to recreate them. (So also Our Lord's breathing on the Apostles to give them the Holy Spirit; the priest's breathing on the candidate for Baptism, on the font at its blessing).

#### GOD FULFILLING HIS PROMISES

Give thanks to the Lord, praise His name, make known His deeds among the nation:

Sing to Him, sing His praises,

Glory in His holy name,

may the heart of those who seek the Lord be joyful.

Look for the Lord and His power,

seek His face always:

Remember the wonders that He wrought,

His great signs, and the judgments of His mouth,—

O race of Abraham, His servants,

O children of Jacob, His chosen:

He the Lord, He is our God,

His judgments govern all the world.

Always mindful is He of His covenant,

the promise made binding for a thousand generations,

The covenant that He made with Abraham,

the oath that He swore to Isaac,

Established as a law for Jacob,

an eternal covenant for Israel:

When He said: "I will give you the land of Canaan, your allotted share of the inheritance."

When they were few in number, a small band of strangers in that country,

Psalm 104. Praises the providence of God toward His people as shown especially in the history of the Patriarchs, and of the Exodus and taking possession of the Promised Land. Let us pray this Psalm in thanksgiving to God for all the wonders of our Redemption, prepared in the Old Testament, accomplished by Our Lord's Passion and Death and Resurrection, now being extended to all mankind through the Church. (Used in Easter Week).

When they wandered from tribe to tribe, from this kingdom to that people,—
He allowed no man to oppress them, for their sake, He rebuked even kings:
"Do not touch My anointed, do no evil to My prophets!"

He called down a famine on the country, took away all their store of bread:

He sent a man before them, Joseph was sold as a slave:

His feet were bound with chains, his neck held fast with iron:

Until his prophecy was at length fulfilled, the word of the Lord proved him innocent.

The king sent the order to loose him, the ruler of peoples set him free:

He made him lord of his house and ruler over all his possessions, To instruct princes according to his pleasure, to teach wisdom to his elders.

Then Israel came into Egypt,
Jacob dwelt in the land of Cham:

God gave great increase to His people,
He made them stronger than their foes,
He changed their hearts to hate His people,
to use deceit against His servants.

Then He sent Moses, His servant, and Aaron, whom He had chosen:

He wrought His wonders among them, His great signs in the land of Cham.

He sent darkness, and all was obscured, but they resisted His words: He changed their waters to blood and all their fish were killed:

Their country swarmed with frogs, even in the chambers of the king:

He spoke, and there came a host of flies, gnats over all the land:

For rain He sent them hail, fire flaming through the land:

He struck their vines and fig-trees, broke all the trees in the region:

He spoke, and then came the locusts, and grasshoppers without number,

Every green thing in the land was devoured, devoured all the fruits of the earth.

And He struck down every first-born in Egypt, the first-fruits of all their strength:

And He led out His people with gold and silver, not a weakling in their ranks:

Egypt rejoiced at their going, for she was overcome with fear.

He spread out a cloud to cover them, and a flame to light up the night:

They asked, and He sent them quails, He filled them with bread from heaven:

He opened the rock, and out flowed the water, running like a river through the desert:

For He remembered His holy word, given to Abraham, His servant:

And He led out His people with gladness, His chosen with shouts of joy.

He gave them the nations' lands, they inherited the peoples' riches: That they might keep His decrees, and observe His commandments, Alleluia!

# THE FAULTS AND PUNISHMENTS OF AN UNGRATEFUL PEOPLE

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy is everlasting:

Who will recount the Lord's mighty deeds, make known all His titles to praise?

Blessed are they who observe His commands, who always do the right:

Think of me, O Lord, in Your love for Your people: visit me with Your aid,

That I may delight in the happiness of Your chosen, rejoice with the joy of Your people,

glory with Your inheritance.

We have sinned, as did our fathers,
we have done wrong, acted impiously:
Our fathers in Egypt gave no heed to Your wonders,
they forgot all Your goodness,

at the Red Sea they rebelled against the Most High. But He saved them for His name's sake,

to make His power known:

He rebuked the Red Sea, and it grew dry,

He led them through the waves as through a desert: He saved them from the power of those who hated them, He freed them from the hand of the foe:

Psalm 105. The people of God recall their repeated infidelities and His unwearying goodness, and pray that they may be restored once more to the Promised Land. Let us pray this Psalm for ourselves and all our fellow-members of the Church for whom God does such great things, that in spite of all our sinfulness and weakness, we may be gathered together in His kingdom forever. (Used on the Feast of the Holy Name, second Sunday in Lent).

Water overwhelmed their enemies, not one of them escaped: Then they believed His words, they sang His praises.

But soon they forgot His deeds,
they did not trust His wisdom:
They burned with desire in the desert,
they tested God in the wilds:
He granted them what they asked,
but He sent them a wasting sickness.
Then in the camp, they envied Moses
and Aaron, holy to the Lord:
The earth opened and swallowed Dathan,
covered over the tent of Abiron:
Fire blazed out against their company,
a flame consumed those wicked men.

At Horeb they made a calf,
they worshipped an idol made of gold:
They exchanged the glory of the Lord,
for the image of a bull that eats grass!
They forgot God, Who had saved them,
Who had done great signs in Egypt,
Wonders in the land of Cham,
astounding deeds at the Red Sea:
He was minded to destroy them,
but Moses, His elect, pleaded with Him
To turn away His wrath,
and not destroy them.

They scorned the land of delights, they did not trust His word: They murmured in their tents, and did not obey the Lord. Then He lifted His hand and swore to strike them down in the desert,

To scatter them among the heathen,
to sweep them off into strange lands.

They joined Bel's rites,
and ate the sacrifice of the dead:
They provoked Him by their crimes,
and a plague attacked them:
Then Phineas arose and gave judgment,
and the plague ceased:
And it was accounted to him for merit,
through all generations, forever.

Then they angered Him at the waters of Meriba, and evil came of it to Moses, by their fault. For they embittered His spirit, and His lips spoke rash words.

They did not destroy the heathen,
as the Lord had commanded:
They mingled with the heathen,
and learned their ways:
They served the idols,
that became a snare for them:
The blood of their sons and daughters
sacrificed to the idols of Chanaan,
shedding the blood of the innocent.
The land was polluted with bloodshed,
they were defiled by their deeds,
debauched by their crimes.

The anger of the Lord burned against His people,
He abhorred His inheritance:
He delivered them up to the heathen,
those who hated them, ruled over them.

Their enemies afflicted them, they were oppressed under their hand.

Time and again He freed them,
but they angered Him with their designs:
But He saw their misery,
He listened to their prayer:
And He remembered His covenant,
He relented, in His great mercy:
And He won for them kindness
from all who held them captive.

Save us, O Lord our God, gather us together from among the nations, To give thanks to Thy holy Name, to glory in singing Your praises.

BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL,
FOREVER!
LET ALL THE PEOPLE CRY,
AMEN, ALLELUIA!

# FIFTH BOOK OF PSALMS

### THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE

"Sing to the Lord, for He is good,
His mercy is everlasting!"
So may they sing, the redeemed of the Lord,
whom He has redeemed from the hand of the foe,
Whom He has gathered together from all lands,
from the sunrise and the sunset,

from the north wind and the south.

They strayed in the desert, in the wilds, finding no path to a city of men:

Hungering, thirsting,

their life was failing.

THEN THEY CRIED TO THE LORD

IN THEIR ANGUISH,

AND HE DELIVERED THEM FROM DISTRESS: He led them out by a straight road,

to reach a city to dwell in.

LET THEM GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HIS MERCY,

FOR HIS WONDERFUL DEEDS

TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN:

Psalm 106. The Psalmist invites the people of God to praise Him for having delivered them from exile. In the first part, four kinds of misery are described—wandering in the desert, being captive to their enemies, in grievous sickness, in the peril of a great storm—and God's deliverance from each, to illustrate the horrors of the Exile and the goodness of God in setting His people free. In the second part, describing God's providence in changing the face of the earth for the benefit of His Own, is seen an illustration again of the return from exile and the longed for restoration to prosperity as God's people. Let us pray this Psalm in thanksgiving for Christ's deliverance of us, achieved on the Cross, applied to us by the Sacraments; and pray that we may rejoice in it forever in heaven. (Used in second Sunday after Epiphany, Easter Week, Feasts of Popes).

For He gives food to the soul that hungers, and the thirsty He fills with blessings.

They sat in darkness and gloom, captives, in misery, in chains:

For they had rebelled against God's words, scorned the counsel of the Highest:

Their heart was humbled with toil, they stumbled and none came to their aid.

THEN THEY CRIED TO THE LORD

IN THEIR ANGUISH,

AND HE DELIVERED THEM FROM DISTRESS:

He led them out of gloom and darkness, He broke their chains asunder.

LET THEM GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HIS MERCY,

FOR HIS WONDERFUL DEEDS

TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN:

He has broken the brazen gates, He cut asunder the iron bars.

They sickened because of their sin, they were afflicted for their crimes, Their soul felt disgust at all food, they drew near to the gates of death.

THEN THEY CRIED TO THE LORD

IN THEIR ANGUISH,

AND HE DELIVERED THEM FROM DISTRESS:

He sent His word to heal them,

He snatched them from the tomb.

LET THEM GIVE THANKS TO THE LORD FOR HIS MERCY.

FOR HIS WONDERFUL DEEDS

TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN.

Offer sacrifices of praise and tell His deeds with shouts of joy.

Those who went down to the sea in ships, merchants on the great waters,

They saw the works of the Lord,

His wonders in the deep:

With a word, He called up the storm-wind, lifting the waves on high:

They mounted up to heaven, sank down to the depths, their soul fainted in the disaster.

Like men drunk, they reeled and staggered, swallowed up was all their skill.

### THEN THEY CRIED TO THE LORD

IN THEIR ANGUISH,

AND HE DELIVERED THEM FROM DISTRESS,

.He turned the storm into calm,

silent were the waves of the sea:

They rejoiced in the stillness,

and the Lord led them to the longed-for haven.

LET THEM PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS MERCY, FOR HIS WONDERFUL DEEDS

TO THE CHILDREN OF MEN:

Proclaim Him in the assembly of the people, praise Him in the council of elders.

He changes rivers to deserts, springs of water to thirsty land, Fertile land into salty marsh,

when those dwelling there are evil. He changes the desert to a lake of water,

arid land into watersprings:

There He settles the starving, and they build up a city of men:

They sow fields and plant orchards, reaping fruitful harvest:

He blesses them and they gain increase, not few are the cattle He gives them. They were enfeebled, brought low under blows of misfortune and sorrow,
But He Who pours His contempt over princes and makes them stray in a pathless desert,
He raises the poor from their misery,
and increases their families like flocks.

Good men see and rejoice,
while all the wicked stand mute.

Let the wise man consider these things,
and weigh well the mercies of the Lord!

## PRAISE OF GOD: PRAYER FOR HELP IN BATTLE

My heart is steadfast, my God, my heart is steadfast,
I will sing and chant praises:
Awake, my soul; awake, harp and lyre,
I will awaken the dawn!

I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples,
 I will praise You among the nations,
For Your mercy reaches to the skies,
 Your faithfulness to the clouds.
O God, show Yourself high above the heavens,
 above all the earth be Your glory:
That Your loved ones may be delivered,
 reach out Your right hand, and answer us!

God has spoken in His sanctuary:

"I will go up to divide Sichem,
measure the valley of Succoth;
Galaad is Mine and Manasses,
Ephraim a helmet for My head, Juda My staff:
Moab is my basin for washing,

on Edom I put My shoe, over Philistia I cry victory."

Who will lead me into a strong city?
who will lead me even into Edom?
O God, would You cast us off,
would You march no more at the head of our armies?

Psalm 107. "A song. A Psalm. Of David." This is made up of sections from Psalm 56 and Psalm 59. Let us pray it for the grace of courage founded in trust in God.

Give us aid against the enemy, for vain is the help of man: With God we will act with courage, He Himself will trample down our foes.

# AGAINST WICKED AND TRAITOROUS ENEMIES

O God, my praise, be not silent, for a mouth that is wicked and deceiving has been opened:

They talk of me with a lying tongue,
they surround me with words of hatred,
without reason warring against me.
In return for my love, they accuse me,
while my prayer is for them:
They return me evil for good,
hatred for my love.

Raise up a wicked man against him,
may an accuser stand at his right hand:
When he is judged, may he be condemned,
may his appeal be made in vain!
May his days be cut short,
may another take his office,
His children become orphans,
his wife, a widow!
May his children wander as vagrants and beggars,
driven out of their ruined homes:
May a usurer take all his goods,
strangers take toll of his labor:

Psalm 108. "For the choirmaster. Of David. A Psalm." The first and third sections are prayers for help against strong and wicked enemies; the middle section is a series of maledictions against an individual. Some commentators think that these are to be understood as being said against the Psalmist rather than by him. St. Peter (Acts 1:20) quotes the 8th verse in reference to Judas. This Psalm, then, is to be understood as being a prayer against the Enemy of God and man, Satan and all his forces. (See also p. xxviii).

May no one show him kindness, no one pity his orphans:

May his children be given up to destruction, his name blotted out in the next generation:

May his father's crime be remembered by the Lord, his mother's sin not erased,

May their sins always be present to the Lord! their memory uprooted from the earth,

For he did not think to show kindness, and he pursued the poor and needy,

the broken-hearted,—to kill him.

He loved cursing,—let it come on him, blessing he loved not,—let it stay far away!

He is clothed with cursing like a cloak, may it seep into his heart like water,

into his bones like oil!

May it be like a garment that covers him, like a belt that always girds him.

May this be the wage of my accusers, who speak evil against me!
But You, O Lord God, be with me for the sake of Your name!
Poor am I, and needy,
my heart is wrung within me:
Like a shadow at sunset, I vanish,

I am swept away like a locust: My knees shake from my fasting, my body grows thin and wan:

I have become a laughingstock, when they see me, they shake their heads.

Help me, O Lord my God, save me according to Your goodness! Let them know that it is Your hand, that You, O Lord, You have done it: If they curse me, may You bless,

if they revolt, may they be confounded and Your servant rejoice:

Let my accusers be clothed with confusion, covered with shame like a garment!

My mouth will give thanks to the Lord, praise Him among the great throng,

For He stands at the right hand of the needy to save him from his judges.

## KING, PRIEST AND CONQUEROR

The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, until I make your foes a stool beneath your feet:" The Lord will extend from Sion

the sceptre of your power, "Rule in the midst of your foes.

Variable and the indict of your foes.

Yours the princely rank from your birthday

in holy splendor,

like dew before the daystar, I have begotten you."
The Lord has sworn and He will not repent,
"You are a priest forever,

a priest like to Melchisedech."

The Lord is at your right hand,
he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath:
He will judge the nations, heap up the slain,
destroy the leaders far and wide:
On his way, he will drink of the torrent,
so to look up in triumph.

Psalm 109. "Of David. A Psalm." Let us sing this Psalm in praise of Christ, the eternal Son of the Father, in His human nature the King of all creation, anointed by the Holy Spirit as Priest forever, Conqueror of sin and death and all the forces of evil. (Quoted in Matt. 22:44; Acts 2:34; 1 Cor. 15, 26; Heb. 1:13; 5:6; 7:21; 10:13; used on Christmas, Masses of Bishops).

## PRAISE OF GOD'S WONDERFUL WORKS

#### ALLELUIA!

I praise the Lord with my whole heart
in the gathering of good men, in the assembly:
Great are the works of the Lord,
to be studied by all who love them:
Splendid is His work and full of grandeur,
His justice unchanging forever:
He has made His wonderful deeds to be remembered,
kind is the Lord, and merciful:
He has given food to those who fear Him,
ever mindful of His covenant.

He has shown the power of His deeds to His people, to give them the heritage of the heathen:

The works of His hands are true and just, unwavering all His commands,

Unchanging for all ages, wrought in truth and right.

He has sent freedom to His people,
established His covenant forever:
His name is holy and to be revered,
with the fear of the Lord begins wisdom:
Prudent are those who worship Him,
His praise remains forever.

God for the great deeds done for His people; especially in giving them the manna in the desert, in enabling them to take possession of the Promised Land, in giving them His Law, in delivering them, and making His covenant with them forever. Let us pray this Psalm in thanksgiving for God's blessings to us in the Church, and to ask for the true wisdom that comes from considering them and living according to them. (Used on Feast of Corpus Christi).

# THE HAPPINESS OF THE JUST MAN

#### ALLELUIA!

How blessed is the man who fears the Lord, greatly loving His commands:
His children shall be powerful on earth, blessed is the generation of the good:
Wealth and riches are in his house, his generosity unfailing:
He dawns like a light in darkness to good men, kind is he, and merciful and just.

How blessed the man who pities and lends, who is just in all his dealings:

Never shall he waver, the memory of the good man will endure:

He need fear no evil tidings, he is strong of heart, trusting in the Lord:

Constant of heart, he will not fear until he see his enemies confounded:

Lavish his giving to the poor, his generosity unfailing, he holds his head high in honor:

Seeing this, the sinner is enraged,

he gnashes his teeth and pines away, the desire of the wicked will perish.

Psalm 111 is an alphabetic Psalm on the theme of the just man, what he does and what happiness is his. Let us pray this Psalm in praise of Christ in Whom these qualities are raised to divine dimensions, and of His saints who participate in His virtues and in their reward. (Quoted in 2 Cor. 9:9; used in Masses of Martyrs, Bishops, Doctors, Confessors, Requiem Masses).

# PRAISE OF GOD, SO EXALTED, SO KIND

#### ALLELUIA!

Praise, O you the Lord's servants, praise the name of the Lord!

May the name of the Lord be blessed now and for evermore.

From the sunrise to the sunset, may the name of the Lord be praised!

The Lord is high over all the nations,
His glory above the heavens:
Who is like to the Lord our God, enthroned on high,
gazing down on earth and heaven.

He lifts the poor man from the dust, the needy from the dung-hill, To seat him among the princes, the princes of His people: He makes her who sat at home childless rejoice, living as the mother of sons.

Psalm 112 begins the series of Psalms (112-117) all beginning with Alleluia (see p. xx) and known as the "Hallel" which were recited on great feasts and at the Paschal meal, and hence at the Last Supper (cf. Matt. 26:30). (Used during Easter week; Blessings of children).

PSALM 113

# "WHEN ISRAEL WENT OUT FROM EGYPT . . ."

#### ALLELUIA!

When Israel went out from Egypt, the house of Jacob from an alien people, Juda became God's sanctuary, Israel became His kingdom.

The sea gazed, and fled away, the river Jordan turned back its course: The mountains bounded like rams, like little lambs, the hills.

Why did you take flight, O sea? why turned you back, O Jordan? O mountains, why did you bound like rams, like little lambs, you hills?

Tremble, O earth, in presence of the Lord, in the presence of the God of Jacob, Who turns the rock into a lake of water, the stone into a fountain.

Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory, for Your kindness, for Your fidelity.

Why should the pagans say,

"Where, then, is their god?"

Psalm 113. It is made up of two Psalms in the Hebrew text. The first praises God for making Israel His People, in the wonders of the Exodus and the crossing of the Jordan into the Promised Land. The second part urges us to trust in the true and living God Who will save and bless us. Let us pray this Psalm in thanksgiving for the wonders of our Redemption and for the grace of knowing and serving God in His Church.

Our God is in heaven, as He wills, so He does.

Their gods are silver and gold, the works of human hands:

They have mouths, but they cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see:

They have ears, but they hear no sounds, nostrils, but savor nothing:

Their hands cannot feel, their feet cannot walk, their throats give out no sound.

Like them be their makers, and all who give them trust!

Let the house of Israel trust in the Lord!—
He is their help and their shield:
Let the house of Aaron trust in the Lord!

He is their help and their shield:

All who fear the Lord, let them trust the Lord, He is their help and their shield:

The Lord is mindful of us, and He will bless us,

He will bless the house of Israel, He will bless the house of Aaron:

He will bless those who fear Him, be they lowly or be they great.

May the Lord give you increase, you and your children!
May you be blessed by the Lord,
He Who made heaven and earth!
The heaven is the heaven of the Lord,
the earth He has given to men.
The dead cannot praise the Lord,
nor those who go down to the tomb:
But we will bless the Lord,

now and for evermore.

# THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH

ALLELUIA!

The Lord is He Whom I love, for He heard the sound of my pleading:

He turned His ear to me on the day when I called Him:

The bonds of death imprisoned me,

the snares of hell surrounded me,

I fell into anguish and sorrow: I called on the name of the Lord, "O Lord, free my soul!"

Gracious is the Lord, and just, merciful is our God:

The Lord watches over the guileless:—
I was weak and He saved me:

Return, O my soul, to your peace, for the Lord has been good to you:

Yes, He has delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling:

I will walk in the presence of the Lord, in the land of the living.

I trusted on, even while I said,
"Great is my distress!",
I cried out in my fear,
"How vain to hope in man!"

Psalms 114 and 115. Together, they form one Psalm in the Hebrew text and express most beautifully both love of God and trust in God Who has saved the Psalmist from great peril. (Quoted in 2 Cor. 4:13; Rom. 3:4; used in Masses of Martyrs, Funeral Rites, the Ordinary of the Mass after Communion, preparation for Mass).

How make return to the Lord for all He has given to me?

I will take the cup of salvation, and invoke the name of the Lord:

I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people.

Great price in the eyes of the Lord,
has the death of His faithful:
I am Your servant, the son of Your handmaid,
You have loosed my bonds:
I will offer the sacrifice of praise,
and call on the name of the Lord,
In the courts of the house of the Lord,
in your midst, O Jerusalem!

### PSALM 116

## HYMN OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING

### ALLELUIA!

O praise the Lord, all you nations, give Him glory, all you peoples, All powerful His mercy toward us, the Lord is true to His promise forever.

[Holy Saturday], Pentecost Week, Benediction).

# THANKSGIVING FOR HOPED-FOR DELIVERANCE

ALLELUIA!

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy is everlasting!

Let the house of Israel say,
"His mercy is everlasting!"

Let the house of Aaron say,
"His mercy is everlasting!"

Let those say who fear the Lord:
"His mercy is everlasting!"

In anguish, I cried to the Lord,
He heard me and set me free:
The Lord is with me, I have no fear,
how can man harm me?
The Lord is with me, He aids me,
I shall see my foes defeated.

Far better to take refuge in the Lord, than to trust in man: Far better to take refuge in the Lord, than to trust in princes.

Psalm 117. It seems to have been sung by several choirs during a solemn procession into the Temple, perhaps for the Feast of Tabernacles. The Psalmist invites God's people to thank Him for having saved him from great peril, when he cried to God for aid. Then begins a kind of dialogue between the Psalmist and the choirs of priests and people as they enter the temple and sing in the temple itself. This Psalm is often quoted in the New Testament in reference to Our Lord and His victory, (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10-11; Luke 20:17; Acts 4:11; Heb. 13:6; I Peter 2:7; used in the Easter Vigil [Holy Saturday], Easter, Easter week and Eastertime, also Christmas and Sundays after Epiphany; Commend. of a departing soul).

All the heathen encircled me, in the Lord's name I destroyed them:

They surrounded me on all sides, in the Lord's name I destroyed them:

They swarmed round me like bees,

they flared up like a fire of thorns, in the Lord's name I destroyed them:

They thrust me down with violence to make me fall, but the Lord came to my aid:

The Lord is my strength and my courage, He has made Himself my savior.

Let shouts of joy and of triumph resound in the tents of the just:

The right hand of the Lord wrought with power, the right hand of the Lord raised me up, the right hand of the Lord wrought with power:

I shall not die, but live

and tell the works of the Lord:

The Lord has scourged and scourged me, but He did not give me over to death!

Open the gates of justice,
that I may enter to give thanks to the Lord.

This is the gate of the Lord, the just will enter herein.

I will thank You, for You have heard me, You have made Yourself my savior.

The stone rejected by the builders has become the keystone of the arch.

By the Lord this deed was done, so marvelous in our eyes.

This is the day that the Lord has made, now let us be glad and rejoice!

O Lord, give us aid, O Lord, make us prosper! Blessed be He Who comes in the name of the Lord! we bless you from the house of the Lord:

The Lord is God, may He be our light:

Form in procession with your green branches, up to the corners of the altar:

You are my God, I will give You thanks, my God, I will celebrate Your praises:

Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, His mercy is everlasting.

### PRAISE OF THE DIVINE LAW

I

How blessed are they who go unstained,
who walk in the law of the Lord!
How blessed are they who treasure His mandates,
who seek Him with all their hearts,
Not doing what is evil,
but walking in His ways:
You have given Your precepts
to be guarded with all care.

O that my ways were laid straight toward observing Your decrees:

Then need I not be ashamed in studying Your commandments:

I will give You thanks from a true heart for teaching me the edicts of Your justice:

Your decrees I will treasure, do not forsake me wholly!

Psalm 118. An alphabetic Psalm on the theme of the wonders of God's Law, described by various synonyms—decrees, precepts, promises, word, commandments. . . . We are blessed in having the fulfillment of the Old Law in Christ and His new commandment of love, and we should never weary of considering its wonders and thanking God for making it known to us. (Used in Masses of Ember Friday in Advent, St. Stephen, Quinquagesima, second Sunday of Lent, Passion Sunday, Pentecost week, Virgin Martyrs, Holy Women, and many others; Monastic profession, Commend. of a departing soul).

How can a young man go unstained? by treasuring Your words:

With my whole heart I seek You, let me not stray from Your commandments:

In my heart I have hidden Your promise, that I may never sin against You:

May You be blessed, O Lord, instruct me in Your decrees:

With my lips I have recounted all the edicts of Your mouth:

In following Your mandates I find such joy that I possess all riches:

I meditate on Your precepts, study Your ways,

I find delight in Your decrees, I will not forget Your words.

ш

Grant Your servant the grace to live and I will keep Your word:

Open up my eyes

to consider the wonders of Your law:

I am a wanderer on earth,—

do not hide from me Your commandments:

My soul faints within me,

always longing for Your edicts:

You rebuke the proud, the accursed who depart from Your commandments:

Turn away from me scorn and contempt, for I have observed Your mandates:

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Though princes take counsel against me, Your servant will meditate Your decrees: Yes, Your sayings are my joy, Your decrees, my counselors.

IV

In the dust, my soul lies prostrate,
give me life according to Your word:
I laid my way before You and You answered me,
O teach me Your decrees:
Set me on the path of Your precepts,
and I will meditate on Your wonders:
My soul weeps for sorrow,
lift me up according to Your word.
Keep me far from the path of falsehood,
grant me the blessing of Your law:
I have chosen the way of truth,
I have waited on Your edicts:
I hold fast to Your mandates,
Lord, put me not to shame!

I will run in the way of Your commandments, for You have given me strength of heart.

Teach me, Lord, the way of Your decrees, and I will follow it to the end:
Give me understanding, that I may keep Your law and observe it with all my heart:
Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, wherein I delight:
Turn my heart to Your mandates, not to love of gain:
Turn my eyes from seeing vain things, give me life through Your way:

Fulfill Your promise to Your servant,
the promise made to those who fear You:
Turn away from me the reproach that I dread,
for Your edicts are kindly:
See how I long for Your precepts,
in Your justice, give me life!

VΙ

May Your mercies come upon me, Lord, and Your saving help, according to Your promise, That I may have an answer for those who insult me, for I hope in Your words:

Do not take from my mouth the word of truth, for I trust in Your edicts:

Let me keep Your law always, for ever and ever.

I shall walk on an open road, for I seek out Your precepts:

I shall speak of Your mandates before kings, and not be ashamed:

I shall delight in Your commandments loving them greatly,

Lift up my hands toward Your commandments, meditate on Your decrees.

VII

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Remember Your word to Your servant,
the word that gave me hope:
In my misery, this my comfort,
that Your promise gives me life.
Proud men bitterly mock me;—
I have not swerved from Your law:
I remember Your judgments of old, O Lord,
and thus I am comforted:

Just wrath takes hold of me
because of sinners who forsake Your law:
Your decrees have become my songs,
in the place where I abide:
By night I am mindful of Your name,
and I will keep Your law:
This blessing has been given me,
because I observe Your precepts.

### VШ

My lot, I have said, O Lord, is the keeping of Your word: With my whole heart I have sought Your smile, have pity on me according to Your promise! I have given thought to my ways, I will turn my steps to Your mandates: I will hasten and make no delay to keep Your commandments: The bonds of the wicked have entangled me, I did not forget Your law: At midnight I rise to give thanks to You, because of the edicts of Your justice: I am the friend of all who revere You. of those who keep Your precepts: The earth is filled with Your kindness, O Lord, teach me Your decrees.

#### IX

You have been good to Your servant, Lord, according to Your word: Instruct me in judgment and wisdom, I trust in Your commandments: Before I met with trials, I went astray but now I hold to Your promise. You are good and You do the good, teach me Your decrees:

Proud men forge lies against me, but with my whole heart I observe Your precepts.

Their heart has grown fat and gross, but I delight in Your law.

It was good for me to be afflicted, so that I learned Your decrees:

Better to me the law of Your mouth, than gold and silver coins by the thousands!

 $\mathbf{x}$ 

Your hands have made me and fashioned me, train me that I may learn Your commandments:

Those who fear You will watch me with joy for I hope in Your word:

Your edicts are just, O Lord, this I know well, and rightly have You afflicted me:

Let Your kindness come to console me according to the promise made to Your servant:

Let Your mercy descend upon me that I may live, for Your law is my delight:

Let the proud who wrong me without cause

be put to shame,

I will meditate on Your precepts:

Let those who fear You turn to me,
those who have a care for Your mandates:

Let my heart be perfect in Your decrees,
and I will not be ashamed.

XI

Longing for Your saving help,

my soul faints within me,

I trust in Your word:

<sup>243</sup>

My eyes ache for Your promise, when will You comfort me?

I have become like a wineskin in the smoke,<sup>1</sup> yet I have not forgotten Your decrees:

How many days has Your servant?

when will You render justice to my persecutors?

The proud have dug a pit for me, those who do not act by Your law:

All Your commandments are to be trusted:—
men pursue me unjustly, O come to aid me!

Almost had they thrown me to the ground, yet I did not forsake Your precepts:

In Your mercy, give me life,
I will keep the mandates of Your mouth.

хп

Eternal, O Lord, is Your word, it stands firm as heaven:

From age to age abides Your promise,—
You have established the earth, it endures:

By virtue of Your edict all things have their being, for all things serve You:

If Your law had not been my delight,

I had died in my distress:

Never will I forget Your precepts, for by them You have given me life:

I am Yours, O save me,

for I seek Your precepts:

The wicked await me, to destroy me,

I am attentive to Your mandates:

I have seen the end of all perfection,<sup>2</sup> far and wide the reaches of Your commandment.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Tanned hides were made into containers for wine and water. If kept too near a fire, they would become brittle and useless.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> I.e., "all human things, however good, are finite."

O Lord, how I love Your law, I think of it all the day:

Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies, for it is with me forever:

I am more prudent than all my masters, for my study is of Your mandates:

More perfect my understanding than the elders', for I observe Your precepts:

I turn away my feet from all evil ways, so that I may keep Your word:

I have not swerved from Your edicts, for it is You Who have taught me:

How sweet on my tongue are Your promises, sweeter than honey in my mouth!

By Your precepts I have been made wise, so that I detest every way of falsehood.

#### XIV

Your word is a lamp for my steps, a light on my path:

I took an oath, I made a promise to hold to the edicts of Your justice:

O Lord, I am greatly afflicted, give me life according to Your word:

Accept the offerings of my mouth, Lord, and teach me Your edicts:

My life is always in danger,

but I do not forget Your law:

The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I have not swerved from Your precepts:

Your mandates are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart:

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I have turned my heart to fulfill Your decrees, forever, even to the end.

XV

I hate men of deceitful hearts, and I love Your law:

You are my protector, my shield, I hope in Your word:

Leave me, you who work evil,

and I will observe the commandments of my God!

Sustain me according to Your promise, and I shall live, let my hope not be confounded:

Help me, and I shall be saved,

and I shall ever be attentive to Your decrees.

You spurn all who depart from Your decrees, for their thought is a lie:

You consider as dung all the wicked of the earth, and so I love Your mandates:

Fearing You, my flesh trembles, and I fear Your edicts.

XVI

I have done what is right and just, do not give me up to my oppressors: Give a pledge for Your servant's welfare,

that proud men may not oppress me:
My eyes ache, seeking for Your salvation,

for Your promise of justice:

Deal with Your servant according to Your mercy and teach me Your decrees:

I am Your servant, instruct me that I may know Your mandates: It is time now for the Lord to act,
they have violated Your law:
For I love Your commandments,
more than gold, more than fine gold:
For I have chosen as my own all Your precepts,
I hate every path of lies.

XVII

Wondrous are Your sayings,
and my soul observes them:
The revelation of Your words gives light,
making wise the simple.
I open my mouth, sighing
with desire for Your commandments:
Turn to me and have mercy,
Your wonted mercy to those who love Your name:
Guide my steps according to Your promise,
let no wickedness triumph over me:
Free me from man's oppression,
I will observe Your precepts:
Let Your face shine on Your servant,
and teach me Your decrees:

XVIII

247

You are just, O Lord,
and just is Your judgment:
In justice You have imposed Your mandates
with sovereign constancy:
The zeal of Your house consumes me,
for Your foes forget Your words:
Well tested is Your promise
and Your servant holds it dear:

Tears flow in rivers from my eyes, because men do not keep Your law. Of little worth as I am and despised,
I do not forget Your precepts:
Your justice is a justice eternal,
Your law is steadfast:
Distress comes over me, and anguish,
but Your commandments are my delight:
Your mandates are justice eternal,—
teach me, and I shall live!

XIX

I cry to You with my whole heart; answer me, O Lord, I will observe Your decrees! I call You, O Lord, save me, I will keep Your mandates: With the first light I rise to implore Your aid, I hope in Your word: My eyes forestall the night-watches, to meditate on Your promises: Hear my cry, O Lord, in Your mercy, according to Your edict, give me life! My evil oppressors are coming, who are far from Your law: O Lord, You are near me and all Your commandments are unchanging: Long since have I learned from Your edicts, that You have established them forever.

 $\mathbf{x}\mathbf{x}$ 

See my misery and deliver me, for I do not forget Your law: Defend my cause, redeem me,
in accord with Your promise, give me life:
Salvation is far from sinners,
they have no care for Your decrees:
How many are Your mercies, Lord,
according to Your edicts, give me life!
Many persecute me, afflict me,
I do not swerve from Your mandates:
I saw the traitors, and was filled with loathing,
for they do not guard Your promise:
See, Lord, how I love Your precepts,
according to Your mercy give me life:
Above all, Your word is unchanging,
eternal every edict of Your justice.

#### XXI

Great men torment me without reason, but it is Your word that my heart reveres: I rejoice in Your promises, like one who finds rich booty: I reject, I abhor all falsehood, but Your law is my love: Seven times a day I praise You, for the edicts of Your justice: Great peace is theirs who love Your law, nothing can make them stumble: O Lord, I hope in Your salvation, I carry out Your commandments: My soul holds fast to Your mandates, loving them greatly: I keep Your precepts and Your commands, for all my ways are in Your sight.

#### XXII

Let my cry, Lord, come into Your presence, according to Your word, teach me! May my supplication come before You, according to Your promise, deliver me! My lips will pour forth praise, when You have taught me Your decrees: My tongue sings of Your promise, for all Your commandments are just! May Your hand be near to help me, for I have chosen Your precepts: I long for Your salvation, O Lord, Your law is my delight: Let my soul live and praise You, may Your edicts come to my aid: I wander like a sheep that is lost, O seek Your servant, for I do not forget Your commandments!

#### AGAINST EVIL TONGUES

I cried out to the Lord in my anguish, and He answered me: "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from a lying lip, from a deceitful tongue!"

What will He give you and what will He add to that, O tongue of deceit? The pointed arrows of a warrior, coals of burning brush!

Woe is me that I dwell in Mosoch,¹
that I live in the tents of Cedar!
Too long has my soul been dwelling
with those who hate peace:
I speak only of peace,
they speak only of war.

<sup>1</sup> Mosoch, a land near the Black Sea, and Cedar, a place in the Syro-Arabian desert, are here used metaphorically to stand for barbarious and warlike peoples.

Psalm 119. "A song of ascents." This title is given to Psalms 119-133, probably because they were sung by the pilgrims going up to Jerusalem for the great yearly feasts (cf Matt. 2:17; Luke 2:41 ff.). Some of them may have been composed by the returning exiles "going up" to Jerusalem from Babylon, since many of the details in these Psalms seem to fit such an origin. We pray this Psalm to be delivered from the exile of earth, among difficulties and temptations.

# THE LORD GUARDS AND PROTECTS HIS PEOPLE

I lift my eyes to the mountains: whence will help come to me? My help is from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

He will not let your foot stumble, He Who guards You, He never sleeps: No, He never slumbers nor sleeps, He Who guards Israel.

The Lord is Your Guardian, the Lord is a shade for you at your right hand: The sun shall not harm you by day, nor the moon by night.

The Lord will protect you from all evil,

He will protect your soul:

The Lord will protect your going out

and your coming in,

now and for evermore.

on the difficult and dangerous journey up through the hills to Jerusalem. We pray it to encourage one another on our difficult life-long pilgrimage to the heavenly city.

## HAIL JERUSALEM, HOLY CITY!

What great joy when they said to me, "We go to the house of the Lord!"
Now at last our feet are standing in your gates, O Jerusalem,
Jerusalem, built like a city into one perfect whole!

Up here come the tribes,
the tribes of the Lord:
It is the law for Israel,
here to praise the Lord's name:
Here are set up the seats of judgment,
the seats of the house of David.

Ask peace for Jerusalem,
"May they be secure, who love you!

Peace be within your walls,
safety in your palaces!"

For the good of my brothers and friends,
let me say: "Peace be yours,"

For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,
I will ask for you good things.

Psalm 121. "A song of the ascents. Of David." The pilgrims pause at the gate of Jerusalem to salute the holy City. Our Jerusalem is the Church. (Used on the second Sunday of Advent, fourth Sunday of Lent).

#### PRAYER OF THE UNFORTUNATE

To You I lift up my eyes,
to You Who dwell in heaven:
See, as the eyes of slaves
are fixed on the hands of their master,
As the eyes of a servant
on the hands of her mistress,
So our eyes are on the Lord our God
until He take pity on us.

Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy on us, we have had more than our fill of scorn:

Our soul has had more than its fill of the scorn of the rich,

of the contempt of the proud.

Fralm 122. "A song of the ascents." Prayed for deliverance from trials and temptations. (Used on the 3rd Sunday of Lent).

# THE LORD, OUR DELIVERER FROM GREAT DANGER

Had the Lord not been with us—
well may Israel say—
Had the Lord not been with us
when men attacked us,
They had swallowed us alive
in the heat of their anger:
Yes, the waters would have engulfed us,
the torrent would have swept over us,
Then the surging waters
would have swept over our heads!

Blessed be the Lord
Who did not make us the prey of their teeth!
Our soul has been snatched free
like a bird from the fowler's net:
The net has been broken
and we are set free.
Our help is in the name of the Lord
Who made heaven and earth.

Psalm 123. "A song of the ascents," which uses the images of an overwhelming flood and of a devouring wild beast to describe the perils of God's people; and the image of a bird set free from a snare to describe God's deliverance. Let us pray this Psalm in thanksgiving for our redemption from the overwhelming waters of evil and the 'roaring lion,' the devil. (Used in Masses of Martyrs).

# THE LORD, THE STRENGTH OF HIS PEOPLE

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Sion: never shaken, standing firm forever.

All round Jerusalem are mountains, so the Lord is round His people, now and for evermore.

For the sceptre of the wicked shall not always hold sway over the heritage of the good,

Lest the good reach out their hands to evil.

Do what is good, O Lord, to men who are good, to those whose hearts are true!

But those who turn off into devious ways,—

may the Lord drive them away with evildoers.

Peace upon Israel!

Psalm 124. "A song of the ascents." Let us pray this Psalm especially for those under the domination of evil authorities. (Used on the fourth Sunday of Lent, the Dedication of a Church).

#### PRAYER FOR COMPLETE RESTORATION

When the Lord brought back Sion's captives,
we were like men in a dream:
Our mouth was filled with laughter,
our tongue with shouts of joy:
Then it was said among the pagans:
"What great things the Lord has done for them!"
Yes, the Lord has done great things for us,
we were filled with gladness.

Bring back, O Lord, our good fortune, like the streams in the southern desert!

They who sowed in tears shall reap with shouts of joy:

They went, they went out weeping, scattering handfuls of grain:

They return, they return with shouts of joy, carrying their sheaves.

Psalm 125. "A song of the ascents." We pray this Psalm in thanksgiving for the wonders of our Redemption, and in petition for the grace to be brought to the eternal well-being of heaven. (Used in Masses of Martyrs).

# TRUE SECURITY COMES FROM GOD'S BLESSING

If the Lord does not build the house,
those who build it work in vain:

If the Lord does not guard the city,
in vain the guards keep watch:

In vain is your rising so early,
your going so late to rest,
You who eat the bread of toil,—
for He gives to His beloved while they sleep.

Yes, children are the Lord's gift,
the fruit of the womb is reward:
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior,
are the sons of a man's youth:
Blessed is the man who has so filled his quiver,
no shame for him
when he contends with his foes at the gate!

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The city-gates of Oriental towns and villages are the place where disputes of all kinds are settled by the elders. The man who has many sons to back him up is in a better position to win favor than the man who is all alone.

Psalm 126. "A song of the ascents. Of Solomon." The Psalmist gives two illustrations to teach the lesson that true security and prosperity come from God alone: the work of man is vain without God's help; children are God's gift also. We may pray this Psalm as an act of abandonment and reliance upon God, leaving it to Him, when we have done our best, to make our work for Him effective and fruitful.

#### WEDDING BLESSINGS

How blessed are those who fear the Lord, who walk in His ways!

You will eat the fruit of your handiwork, blessed will you be, and prospered,
Your wife like a fruitful vine
in the inner rooms of your house,
Your children like young olive plants
around your table:
See how he is blessed,
the man who fears the Lord!

May the Lord bless you from Sion
that you may see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life,
And may you see your children's children
and peace over Israel!

Psalm 127. "A song of the ascents," which is a beautiful description of rightful human happiness in married life. As Christians, we may well pray for these benefits in their obvious meaning, for ourselves and others, but in doing so, we need to remember that to walk in Christ's ways means to follow Him through His Passion and Death to the glory of His Resurrection; and that it is for this final fruition and happiness that we pray unconditionally for ourselves and our children, and for our fellow Christians. By the 'prosperity of Jerusalem' and the 'peace of Israel,' we understand the growth and welfare of the Church, in which we ask to share on earth and in heaven. The fourth verse is applied in the Liturgy of Corpus Christi to the children of the Church growing strong by partaking of the Holy Eucharist; and this application also reminds us that Christian marriage is an image of the union between Christ and His Church.

# LONG OPPRESSED, ISRAEL IMPLORES GOD'S HELP

Harshly have they oppressed me from my youth,—
well may Israel say—
Harshly have they oppressed me from my youth,
but they did not overcome me:

On my back the ploughmen have ploughed, lengthening their furrows:
But the Lord, the Just, has broken the yoke of the wicked.

May they be confounded and driven off, all who hate Sion!

May they be like the grass on the housetops, before it grows high, it withers, 1

Not filling the hands of the reaper, nor the arms of the binder of sheaves,

And those who go by do not say:

"On you be the Lord's blessing!

We bless you in the name of the Lord!"

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> On the flat roofs of Oriental houses, grass often grows up quickly after a rain and withers as quickly. It nourishes no one, causes no one to bless God—so may the wicked wither away.

Psalm 128. "A song of the ascents." Often oppressed during its long history, but always rescued by God before complete destruction, Israel prays that her enemies may now be driven away so as to leave no trace of them or their doings. We may pray this Psalm that God will drive away the forces of evil and all the effects of the past victories of sin from ourselves and from the whole Church. (Used on Passion Sunday).

#### OUT OF THE DEPTHS

Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!
O listen intently,
hear the cry of my supplication!
If You, Lord, were mindful of our sins,
Lord, who could endure it?
But forgiveness is Yours,
so that with reverence men may serve You!

I hope in the Lord,
my soul hopes in His word:
My soul looks to the Lord,
more than watchmen look for daybreak.

More than watchmen look for daybreak, let Israel look to the Lord: For mercy is the Lord's and abundant redemption: He will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Psalm 129. "A song of the ascents," and the Sixth Penitential Psalm. The Psalmist cries out to God from the depths of sin; we are all sinners, but we trust in God's loving forgiveness and await it with eager desire; and urge all God's people to desire it and trust in it also. (Used on Septuagesima; preparation for Mass; and in the Funeral Rites).

### CHILDLIKE TRUST IN GOD

My heart, O Lord, is not proud,
my eyes are not haughty:
I do not go after great things,
things far above me:
But I have established my soul
in stillness and peace,
Like a little child in the lap of his mother,
like a little child, so is my soul within me.

O Israel, hope in the Lord, now and forever!

Psalm 130. "A song of the ascents. Of David." Let us pray this Psalm for the grace of childlike trust and rest in God.

### DAVID'S PROMISE TO THE LORD: THE LORD'S PROMISE TO DAVID

O Lord, in kindness remember David,
remember all his care,
The oath he swore to the Lord,
the vow he made to the Strong One of Jacob:
"I will not enter the tent where I dwell,
I will not lie down to rest on my bed,
I will not give sleep to my eyes,
nor slumber to my eyelids,
Until I find a place for the Lord,
a dwelling for the Strong One of Jacob."

See, we heard of its presence in Ephrata,
we found it in the fields of Jaar:
Let us come into His dwelling,
fall down in worship before his footstool.
Arise, O Lord, come to Your resting-place,
You and the Ark of Your majesty:
May Your priests be clothed with justice,
Your faithful shout for joy!
For the sake of David Your servant,
do not turn away from the face of Your anointed.

Psalm 131. "A song of the ascents," is considered by many authorities to be a summary of the discourse given by Solomon at the dedication of the Temple (3 Sam. 8; 2 Par. 5). In the first part, the Psalmist describes David's promise to the Lord; how it was carried out by transferring the Ark to Mt. Sion and now by its solemn installation in the Temple. In the second part, he describes the Lord's promise to David, and how that promise is to be fulfilled. We know that this promise is fulfilled in Christ, the Son of David, and in His Church; and that it will be carried out in perfect fullness in the heavenly city for all eternity. (Used in Masses of Bishops).

The Lord has sworn to David,
and He will not turn from His promise;
"The fruit of your own body
I will place upon your throne:
If your children keep My covenant
and the precepts that I will give them,
Their children also, forever,
shall reign upon your throne."

For the Lord has chosen Sion,
there He has willed to dwell:
"Here is My resting-place forever,
here will I dwell, as I have chosen!
With abundance of food I will bless her,
to her poor, I will give their fill of bread,
Her priests I will clothe with salvation,
her faithful shall shout for joy:
Here I will make David's power grow great 1
I will make ready a lamp for My anointed:
With shame will I clothe His enemies,
but on him shall My crown shine bright."

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Lit., "a horn arise for David." See note 1 on p. 144.

#### THE HAPPINESS OF BROTHERLY LOVE

See how good it is, how pleasant to live as one, like brothers!

It is like precious ointment on the head, flowing down the beard,

Flowing down Aaron's beard, down the neck of his vestments:

Like a dew from Hermon falling on the mountains of Sion:—

For here the Lord sends His blessing, and life for evermore.

Psalm 132. "A song of the ascents. Of David." Uses two images to describe the overflowing and gladdening effects of brotherly harmony and affection: the perfumed oil poured on Aaron's head to consecrate him as High Priest; abundant dew falling on the slopes of Mt. Sion. Mt. Hermon is a great snow-capped mountain at the north of the Holy Land, whose abundant streams are themselves an image of the Lord's blessings. Some say that this Psalm may have been sung by the pilgrims gathered in Jerusalem for a great feast to remind them to keep peace among themselves while they were in the Holy City. We can pray it for an increase of that love for one another which is Christ's new commandment.

### NIGHT PRAYER AND BLESSING

Come now, bless the Lord,
all you who serve the Lord,
Who stand in the Lord's house
through the night hours.
Lift up your hands to the holy place
and bless the Lord.

May the Lord bless you from Sion, He Who made earth and heaven!

Psalm 133. "A song of the ascents," may have been sung in the temple by the priests and Levites going to rest, to those whose duty it was to watch during the night; and they answer by giving a blessing. We can pray it for all those who rise during the night to say the Divine Office.

# PRAISE OF GOD, LORD OF ALL THINGS, BENEFACTOR OF ISRAEL

#### ALLELUIA!

Praise the Lord's name,
praise Him, you who serve the Lord,
Who stand in the house of the Lord,
in the courts of the house of our God.
Praise the Lord, for He is good,
sing to His name, for it is our delight,
For the Lord has chosen Jacob,
Israel for His own possession.

This I know: the Lord is great, our King is above all gods:

Whatever the Lord wills, He does in heaven and earth, in the sea and in all the deep waters:

He brings clouds from the world's end,

makes rain by the lightning,

brings out the wind from His storehouse.

He struck down the first-born of Egypt, both men and beasts:

He wrought great signs and wonders in your midst,
O Egypt,

in the sight of Pharaoh and all his servants:

He struck down many nations,

He slew mighty kings:

Sehon, king of the Amorrites, Og, king of Basan, and all the kings of Canaan:

Psalm 134. We can pray this Psalm in praise of God, the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier of His people. (Used on the 4th Sunday of Lent).

He gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to Israel, His people.

Your name, O Lord, stands forever,
Your memory, O Lord,
endures from generation to generation,
For the Lord guards His people
He takes pity on His servants.

The heathen idols are gold and silver,
works of the hands of man,—
They have a mouth and do not speak,
eyes and do not see,
They have ears and do not hear,
they have no breath in their mouths:
May they be like them, those who make them,
and all who give them trust.

House of Israel, bless the Lord!

House of Aaron, bless the Lord!

House of Levi, bless the Lord,

you who fear the Lord, bless the Lord:

Blessed be the Lord from Sion,

in Jerusalem His dwelling!

### HIS MERCY IS EVERLASTING

#### ALLELUIA!

Praise the Lord, for He is good,for His mercy is everlasting: Praise Him, the God of gods,for His mercy is everlasting: Praise Him, the Lord of lords,for His mercy is everlasting: Who alone does great wonders,for His mercy is everlasting: Who made the heavens in wisdom, for His mercy is everlasting: Who spread the earth above the waters, for His mercy is everlasting: Who made the great lights,for His mercy is everlasting: The sun to rule the day,for His mercy is everlasting: The moon to govern the night,for His mercy is everlasting:

Who struck down Egypt in its first-born,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
Who brought out Israel from its midst,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
With a strong hand and an outstretched arm,—
for His mercy is everlasting:

Psalm 135. A litany, with the refrain "for His mercy is everlasting." It invites us to praise God for the wonders of His creating, redeeming and conserving work in our behalf,—all of which He does for the new People of God, the Church, in a higher and more abundant way. (Used in Eastertime).

Who cleft the Red Sea asunder,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
And let out Israel through its midst,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
And overwhelmed Pharaoh and his army
in the Red Sea,—

for His mercy is everlasting:
Who led His people through the desert,—
for His mercy is everlasting:

Who struck down great kings,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
And slew mighty kings,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
Sehon, king of the Amorrites,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
And Og, king of Basan,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
And gave their land as a heritage,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
As a heritage to Israel, His servant,—
for His mercy is everlasting:

Who remembered us in our humiliation,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
And freed us from our enemies,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
Who gives food to all flesh,—
for His mercy is everlasting:
Praise the God of heaven,
for His mercy is everlasting.

#### IN EXILE

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and we wept, remembering Sion: On the willow-trees of that land, we hung up our harps. There our captors demanded songs of us,

our tormentors asked for rejoicing: "Sing us a song,

from the songs of Sion!"

How could we sing a song of the Lord in an alien land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand move no more, May my tongue cleave to my mouth, if I remember you not, If I do not put Jerusalem above all joy of mine!

Remember, Lord, against Edom's sons, Jerusalem's fatal day, When they cried, "Destroy it, destroy it down to its very foundations!" Daughter of Babylon, you destroyer!

Psalm 136. The Psalmist describes the homesickness of the exiles during the captivity in Babylon, their determination to remain true to their own country, their prayer for the destruction of those who so cruelly destroyed the Holy City. We pray this Psalm for those who have fallen away from the Church that God may fill their hearts with true homesickness and with detestation of the forces of evil; we also pray it for the grace of longing for heaven. (See also p. xxviii).

Happy he who pays back to you, the evils done to us, Happy he who takes your little ones to dash them against a rock!

### THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S BENEFITS

I give You thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart, for You have listened to the words of my mouth:

I sing Your praise in the presence of the angels,
I bow down before Your holy temple:

I give thanks to Your name,

for Your goodness and Your faithfulness:

For greater than all things, have You made Your name and Your promise:

On the day when I called, You answered me, You gave me strength tenfold in my soul.

All the kings of the earth will give You thanks, O Lord, when they have heard the words of Your mouth:

They will sing the ways of the Lord,

"Truly great is the glory of the Lord":

Exalted is the Lord, yet He looks on the lowly, but the proud He regards from afar.

When I walk in the midst of trouble, You give me life:

Against the fury of my enemies You reach out Your hand, Your right hand saves me.

May the Lord complete what He has begun for me, Your goodness endures forever, O Lord, forsake not the work of Your hands!

Psalm 137. "Of David." The Psalmist thanks God for His aid, prays that all the kings of the earth may join him in praising God, because He has heard and will hear the Psalmist's prayer. Let us pray this Psalm with the whole Body of Christ in thanksgiving for Christ's victory which is to be extended to the whole of creation.

#### PRAISE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

Lord, You have examined me and You know me, You know me as I sit down and as I rise up. From afar You understand my thoughts, You see when I walk and when I sleep,

aware of all my ways:

Before words come to my tongue,
O Lord, You know them all:
Before me, behind me,—You are all around me,
You lay Your hand upon me.
Too marvellous for me is such knowledge,
too sublime for me to grasp.

Where could I go far from Your spirit, where flee away from Your face? If I climb to heaven, You are there, if I lie down in sheol, You are present:

Psalm 138. "For the choirmaster. Of David. A Psalm." The Psalmist is filled with holy fear and wonder at God's perfect knowledge of him and continual presence with him, which teaches him that God's plans are far beyond his understanding. He prays God, then, to put right all that is wrong in the world and in himself, that he may be pleasing to Him. The first verse in the 4th stanza in the older Latin translations used in the Missal, reads differently, praising God's friends and the power He has given them, rather than His designs and their vast extent; and this is the reason for this verse's use in Masses of the Apostles. And the last line of this same stanza reads: "I am risen and am still with thee" which is the reason for its being used as the opening line of the Introit on Easter Sunday. But the present more accurate wording of the text in the new Latin Psalter is also most appropriate for these liturgical uses, for God's great design for our salvation, so far beyond the understanding of men or angels, was achieved by Our Lord's Death and Resurrection, and proclaimed to the world by the Apostles.

If I take the wings of the dawn,
if I dwell at the ends of the sea,

Even there Your hand would lead me,
Your right hand would hold me:

If I say: "At least let the darkness cover me,
let night surround me like light,"—

To You darkness itself is not dark,
the night shines clear as day,
to You the dark is like light.

You fashioned my inmost being,
in my mother's womb, You knit all my fibres:
I praise You that my making was so marvellous,
that so wonderful are Your works:
Full well do You know my soul,
my frame was not hidden from You,
When I was fashioned in secret,
woven in the depth of the earth:
Your eyes see my actions,
all are written in Your book:
The number of my days was appointed
before one of them began.

How lofty, then, to my sight are Your designs, O God, how vast their sum!

If I would count them, they would outnumber the sands, if I could reach their end, I would be with You still!

O God, if You would but destroy the wicked, if bloodthirsty men would depart from me!

Deceitfully they rebel against You, faithlessly Your enemies rise against You:

Those who hate You, Lord, should I not hate? those who rise against You, should I not loathe?

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The sea: The Mediterranean, to a Palestinian, was a synonym for the far west.

Boundless is my hatred of them, they are enemies to me.

Examine me, O God, and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts:

See if I walk on a crooked path, lead me in the way laid down from of old.

### AGAINST VIOLENT AND WICKED ENEMIES

Deliver me, Lord, from men of malice, guard me from men of violence,
They plan evils in their heart,
day after day they stir up quarrels,
They sharpen their tongue like a serpent's,
viper's venom under their lips.

Save me, Lord, from the hands of the wicked, guard me from men of violence,
Who plot to make me stumble, proud men hide a trap for my feet,
They stretch out ropes for a net, they set a snare beside my path.
I say to the Lord: "You are my God, hear, O Lord, the cry of my supplication!"
O Lord God, strong to save me, be my helmet in the day of battle!

Do not grant to the wicked, Lord, their desires,
do not prosper their plans!

Those who surround me raise their heads in pride,
may the malice of their own lips overwhelm them:

May coals of fire rain upon them,
may they fall in a pit and not rise up.

May the man of evil tongue not endure in the land,
evil fall suddenly on men of violence!

Psalm 139. "For the choirmaster. A Psalm. Of David." We pray this Psalm to be delivered from temptations, and from the malice of those who are doing the work of the Evil One. (Quoted in Rom. 3:13; used in Holy Week, especially Good Friday).

I know that the Lord will defend
the rights of the needy,
give justice to the poor:
Then the just will give thanks to Your name,
true men will dwell in Your presence.

#### EVENING PRAYER

I cry to You, Lord, make haste to help me, hear my voice, when I cry: Let my prayer come before You like incense, the lifting up of my hands like an evening sacrifice!

Set a guard, O Lord, at my mouth,
 a watch at the door of my lips:

Keep my heart from inclining to evil,
 from entering into wicked deeds:

Let me not be found in the company of evildoers,
 let me not taste their delights.

May the just man strike me: this is kindness,
 reprove me: it is oil for my head,

My head will not refuse it,
 and I will still pray under these evils.

Their great men were cast down near the rock,
 and they heard how pleasant were my words,

As when the ground is ploughed and furrowed,
 their bones are strewn at the mouth of sheol!

To You, Lord, I turn my eyes,
I fly to You, destroy not my soul:

Psalm 140. "A Psalm. Of David." The Psalmist asks God to accept his prayer as if it were a sacrifice; prays to be preserved from the wicked who will be destroyed, and once more implores God's aid. The last line in the first stanza is applied by the Fathers to Our Lord's arms outstretched in the Sacrifice of Calvary which took place in the 'evening' of the world.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The meaning of this verse and the next, of which the text has been corrupted, is very obscure and no explanation seems entirely satisfactory.

Keep me from the trap they have set for me, from the snares of those who do evil:

May the godless fall into their own nets, while I escape, safe and free!

#### PRAYER OF A MAN FORSAKEN

With a loud voice I cry to the Lord, with a loud voice I implore the Lord, In His presence I pour out my care, I spread out my anguish before Him: When my spirit fails within me, You know my way.

On the way where I walk
they have hidden a snare.
I turn to the right and look,—
there is no one who has a care for me!
Gone all way of escape,
no one cares for my life.

I cry out to You, O Lord,
I say: "You are my refuge,
my lot in the land of the living":

Give heed to my cry,
great is my misery:
Snatch me from those who persecute me,
for they are stronger than I:
Lead me out of prison,
to give thanks to Your name.
Good men will gather round me,
when You have granted me this good!

Psalm 141. "A maskil. Of David, when he was in the cave. A prayer." (See I Sam. 2:1; 24, I ff.). The Psalmist in great danger implores the help of God, Who knows his need, and that all human aid is lacking, and promises to give thanks. We pray this Psalm for God's aid in great trials and temptations, for ourselves and our fellow-members of the Mystical Body of Christ.

#### PRAYER IN GREAT DISTRESS

Hear my prayer, O Lord, heed my supplication for the sake of Your fidelity, answer me for the sake of Your justice!

Do not call up Your servant to judgment, for in Your sight no living man is just.

The enemy has pursued my soul, cast down my life to the ground, He has made me dwell in darkness, like those long dead:

My spirit fails me,

my heart is tormented within me.

I remember the days of old, I consider Your great deeds, I meditate on the works of Your hands:

I hold out my hands to You, like a thirsty land is my soul in Your presence.

Answer quickly, O Lord, my spirit is failing: Do not hide Your face from me

lest I become like those who go down to the grave:

Soon let me feel Your mercy,

for in You do I trust:

Show me the way I should take,

for to You do I lift up my soul:

Rescue me from my enemies, O Lord, for in You is my hope.

Psalm 142. "A Psalm. Of David." The Psalmist implores God's promised aid, though he knows that he deserves punishment for his sins; he prays to be rescued from grave peril and taught to do God's will. This is the Seventh Penitential Psalm, and a wonderful prayer for all of us sinners. (Used on Passion Sunday and Holy Week).

Teach me to do Your will,
for You are my God:
How good is Your spirit!
may it lead me on an even path:
For the sake of Your name, O Lord, give me life,
in Your kindness, lead my soul out of anguish!
In Your grace, strike down my enemies,
destroy those who oppress my soul,
for I am Your servant.

# THE KING'S PRAYER FOR VICTORY AND PROSPERITY

Blessed be the Lord, my Rock,
Who trains my hands for war, my fingers for battle:
My mercy and my fortress,
my stronghold, my deliverer,
My shield and my refuge,
Who makes peoples subject to me.

What is man, O Lord, that You care for him,
the son of man, that You should think of him—
Man who is like a breath,
his days like a passing shadow?
O Lord, bend Your heavens and come down,
touch the mountains and they will smoke:
Flash out Your lightning and scatter the foe,
shoot Your arrows, put them to flight:
Reach out Your hand from on high,
rescue me, deliver me from the great waters,
from the power of strangers,

Whose mouth utters a lie, whose right hand is raised to swear falsely.

O God, I will sing You a new song, on a ten-stringed lyre will I praise You: To the kings You give victory You have rescued David, Your servant,

Psalm 143. "Of David." The king proclaims God as his protection and help; conscious of man's lowliness and weakness, he implores God's aid against his enemies; promises praise and thanks; asks for prosperity and peace for his people. We pray this Psalm for protection and welfare of the Mystical Body of Christ on earth.

Deliver me from the evil sword free me from the power of strangers, Whose mouth utters a lie, whose right hand is raised to swear falsely!

May our sons be like seedlings,
growing tall from their youth:
Our daughters like upright pillars,
fine-wrought for a palace:
May our barns be full,
overflowing with every store:
May our flocks increase a thousand-fold,
our oxen be well-laden:
No breach in our walls, no exile,
no mourning in our streets:
How blessed the people who have such things,
how blessed the people whose God is the Lord!

## GOD'S GREATNESS AND GOODNESS

I will praise You, my God, my king, bless Your name for ever and ever:

I will bless You every day, praise Your name for ever and ever.

The Lord is great and greatly to be praised, unfathomable His greatness:

Generation after generation proclaim Your works, and makes known Your power,

They tell the brightness of Your splendor, recount Your wonders:

Speak of Your tremendous deeds and their power, they tell of Your greatness.

They proclaim the praise of Your great goodness, and rejoice in Your justice.

The Lord is kind and merciful, slow to anger, rich in mercy:

The Lord is good to all things, He has pity on all He has made.

May all Your works praise You, O Lord, may all Your faithful bless You!

May they tell the glory of Your kingdom, and speak of Your power,

To make known Your might to the sons of men, and the majesty of Your glorious kingdom:

Your kingdom is a kingdom of all ages, Your rule extends through all generations.

Psalm 144. "Praises. Of David." This is an alphabetic Psalm on the theme of God's greatness and goodness, to be praised by all peoples in all ages. (Used on Ember Wed. in Advent, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi, Feasts of Martyrs).

Faithful the Lord in all His deeds,
and holy in all His works:

The Lord sustains all who are falling,
He raises those bent low:
On You rest the eyes of all creatures,
You give them their food in due season:
You open Your hand,
and fill every creature with Your kindness.

The Lord is just in all His ways,
holy in all His works:
The Lord is near to all who call on Him,
to all who call on Him in truth:
He does the will of those who fear Him,
He hears their cry and He saves them:
The Lord guards all those who love Him,
but all the wicked He destroys.

Let my mouth sing the praise of the Lord, let all flesh for ever bless His holy name!

# PRAISE OF GOD THE CREATOR. HELP OF THE WEAK, ETERNAL KING

ALLELUIA!

Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord all my life, I will sing to my God while I live.

Put no trust in princes, in mere man who cannot save: When his spirit departs, he goes back to his earth, then all his plans die with him.

Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord his God, In Him Who made heaven and earth and sea, and all their creatures.

He keeps faith forever.

He gives justice to the oppressed:

He gives food to the hungry, the Lord frees the captives:

The Lord opens the eyes of the blind, He raises up those who are bent low:

The Lord loves the just,

the Lord watches over strangers:

He protects the orphan and the widow: but He thwarts the way of the wicked.

The Lord reigns for ever,

your God, O Sion, from generation to generation,

Alleluia!

Psalm 145. God is our only help. This hymn begins a new "Hallel" (Psalms 145-150), which was recited every day by the Israelites.

## PRAISE OF GOD'S PROVIDENCE

#### ALLELUIA!

Praise the Lord for He is good,
sing to our God for He is our joy, praise is due Him!
The Lord builds Jerusalem,
He gathers in the exiles of Israel:
He heals the broken of heart,
He binds up their wounds.

He appoints the number of the stars, and calls them each by name:
Great is our Lord, and mighty in strength,
His wisdom has no measure:
The Lord raises up the lowly,
He strikes the wicked down to the earth.

Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving,
play on the harp to our God:
Who covers the heavens with clouds,
Who makes ready the rain for the earth:
Who makes grass spring up on the mountains
and plants to serve man's need:
Who gives their food to the beasts,
and the young ravens who cry to Him:

Psalms 146 and 147, probably form one Psalm as in the current Hebrew text, praising God, the all wise, powerful and kind, Who restores Israel; Who rules all things in favor of those who trust in Him; Who cares for Jerusalem while He rules all the forces of nature, giving His laws and commands to Israel as He had done for no other nation. To the new people of God, the Church, God gives His care and blessings in an even more wonderful way than to His people in the Old Testament.

His delight is not in the strength of a horse, nor His pleasure in a man's swiftness,<sup>1</sup> The Lord is pleased with those who fear Him, with those who hope in His goodness.

<sup>1.</sup>e., the Lord is not like an earthly king whose chief interest is the usefulness of his servants in warfare.

## PRAISE OF GOD THE OMNIPOTENT

O Jerusalem, praise the Lord, praise your God, O Sion!

He has strengthened the bars of your gates, blessed your sons within you,

He has brought peace to your lands, satisfied you with rich wheat.

He sends out His command to the earth,
His word runs swiftly:
He lets snow-flakes fall like wool,
scatters the hoarfrost like ashes:
He throws down the hailstones like crumbs,
the waters freeze beneath His cold:
He sends out His word and melts them,
commands His wind to blow and the waters run.

He made known His word to Jacob,
His laws and commands to Israel:
So has He done for no other nation,
to none other made known His commands. Alleluia!

PSALM 148

## PRAISE THE LORD!

#### ALLELUIA!

Praise to the Lord from the heavens!
praise Him in the heights:
Praise Him, all you His angels,
praise Him, all you His hosts:
Praise Him, sun and moon,
praise Him, all you bright stars:
Praise Him, you heavens of heavens
and you waters above the heavens:
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for He spoke and they were created:
He founded them for ever and ever,
He gave them a command that will not pass away.

Praise to the Lord from the earth!
whales and all the depths of the sea,
Fire and hail, snow and mist,
storm wind that does His word:
Mountains and every hill,
fruit trees and all cedars:
All you beasts, wild and tame,
creeping things and winged birds:
Kings of the earth and all peoples,
leaders and all earth's judges:
Young men and maidens,
old men together with children,—
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
for His name alone is great:

Psalm 148. Invites all creation to praise the Lord, together with His own people.

His majesty is above earth and heaven,
He has raised high the power 1 of His people:
This is the praise of all His faithful,
of the sons of Israel,
the people so near Him. Alleluia!

<sup>1</sup> Lit. 'the horn.' See note 1 on p. 144.

# PRAISE THE LORD WITH VOICE AND SWORD

ALLELUIA!

Sing to the Lord a new song,
let His praise resound in the assembly of the faithful:
Let Israel take joy in her Maker,
The sons of Sion exult in their king:
Let them praise His name with dancing,
sing to Him with timbrel and harp:
For the Lord loves His people,
He adorns the lowly with triumph.

Let the faithful rejoice in glory,
on their beds let them sing for joy:
God's praise be on their lips
and a two-edged sword in their hands,
To inflict vengeance on the nations,
punishment on the peoples,
To bind their kings with fetters,
their nobles with iron chains,
To carry out the appointed judgment,—
this the glory of all His faithful. Alleluia!

Psalm 149. Invites God's people to praise Him, while they are ready to fight for His cause until the time of final judgment and condemnation of their enemies. A wonderful Psalm for the Christian life on earth, made up at once of praise of God and battle against the forces of evil.

PSALM 150

# SOLEMN PRAISE OF GOD

ALLELUIA!

Praise God in His sanctuary,
praise Him in the stronghold of His power:
Praise Him for His wonderful works,
praise Him for His infinite majesty.
Praise Him with sounding horns,
praise Him with zither and harp,
Praise Him with timbrels and dancing,
praise Him with plucked strings and pipes,
Praise Him with resounding cymbals,
praise Him with crashing cymbals!
Let all that breathes praise the Lord!
Alleluia!

Psalm 150. A glorious conclusion for the whole Psalter. God is to be praised in His temple on earth and in heaven for His wonderful deeds and His greatness, by every kind of music and by everything that breathes. (Used in thanksgiving after Mass). "Thou Who art the loveliest melody of our choir, Thou Who hast commanded that the songs of our hearts should be rendered now by wind instruments, now by strings; grant that while we are singing with this spiritual desire, we may be admitted among the everlasting choirs and praise Thee together with all Thy saints. (Psalter Collect for Psalm 150 of the Romana series, collected by Dom Wilmaert and Dom Brou).

# Arrangement of the Psalms in the Roman Breviary \*

#### SUNDAY

MATINS, 94. 1st Nocturne: 1, 2, 3; 2nd Noct.: 8, 9A; 3rd Noct.: 9B, 10.

LAUDS: 92, 99, 62, 148. (In Advent, Lent; 50, 117, 62, 148).

PRIME: 117, 118 (1st 4 stanzas).

TERCE: 118 (stanzas 5-10 inc.) SEXT: 118 (11-16 inc.) NONE: 118 (17-22).

VESPERS: 109-113 inc. COMPLINE: 4, 90, 133.

### MONDAY

MATINS, 94. 1st Noct.: 13, 14, 16; 2nd Noct.: 17; 3rd Noct.: 19, 20, 29.

LAUDS: 46, 5, 28, 116 (In Advent and Lent: 50, 5, 28, 116).

PRIME: 23, 18.

TERCE: 26, 27; SEXT: 30; NONE: 31, 32.

VESPERS: 114, 115, 119, 120, 121. COMPLINE: 6, 7.

#### **TUESDAY**

MATINS, 94. 1st Noct.: 34; 2nd Noct.: 36; 3rd Noct.: 37, 38. LAUDS: 95, 42, 66, 134 (In Advent, Lent: 50, 42, 66, 134).

PRIME: 24; TERCE: 39; SEXT: 40, 41; NONE: 43. VESPERS: 122-126 inc. COMPLINE: 11, 12, 15.

\* Matins is the Office for the night hours, divided into Nocturnes or night-watches. Lauds and Vespers are the traditional Hours for morning and evening public praise of God: The Benedictus (p. xxxvi) is always said at Lauds, the Magnificat (p. xxxv) at Vespers. Terce, Sext and None (app. 9, 12, and 3 o'clock) are traditionally the Hours for turning to God in the midst of the day's work. Prime was added in monasteries to ask God's blessing on the day's work; and Compline to ask His blessing on the night's rest. (The Nunc Dimittis (p. xxxvii) is always said at Compline.

#### WEDNESDAY

MATINS, 94. 1st Noct.: 44, 45; 2nd Noct.: 47, 48; 3rd Noct.: 49, 50.

LAUDS: 96, 64, 100, 145. (Advent and Lent: 50, 64, 100, 145).

PRIME: 25, 51, 52; TERCE: 53, 54; SEXT: 55, 56, 57; NONE: 58, 59.

VESPERS: 127-131 inc. COMPLINE: 33, 60.

#### **THURSDAY**

MATINS, 94. 1st Noct.: 61, 65; 2nd Noct.: 67; 3rd Noct.: 68. LAUDS: 97, 89, 35, 146. (Advent and Lent: 50, 89, 35, 146). PRIME: 22, 71; TERCE: 72; SEXT: 73; NONE: 74, 75. VESPERS: 132, 135, 136, 137. COMPLINE: 69, 70.

#### FRIDAY

MATINS, 94. 1st Noct.: 77 (1st half); 2nd Noct.: 77 (2nd half); 3rd Noct.: 78, 80, 82.

LAUDS: 98, 142, 84, 147. (Advent and Lent: 50, 142, 84, 147). PRIME: 21. TERCE: 79, 81; SEXT: 83, 86; NONE: 88.

VESPERS: 138-141 inc. COMPLINE: 76, 85.

#### SATURDAY

MATINS, 94. 1st Noct.: 104; 2nd Noct.: 105; 3rd Noct.: 106. LAUDS: 149, 91, 63, 150. (Advent and Lent: 50, 91, 63, 150).

PRIME: 93, 107; TERCE: 101; SEXT: 103; NONE: 108.

VESPERS: 143, 144. COMPLINE: 87, 102.

# Arrangement of the Psalms in the Monastic Breviary

#### SUNDAY

MATINS: 3, 94. 1st Noct.: 20-25; 2nd Noct.: 26-31.

LAUDS: 66, 50, 117, 62, 148, 149, 150.

PRIME: 118 (1-4); TERCE: 118 (5-7); SEXT: 118 (8-10); NONE:

118 (11-13).

VESPERS: 109-112. COMPLINE: 4, 90, 133.

### MONDAY

MATINS: 3, 94. 1st Noct.: 32-27; 2nd Noct.: 38-44.

LAUDS: 66, 50, 5, 35, 148, 149, 150.

PRIME: 1, 2, 6; TERCE: 118 (14-16); SEXT: 118 (17-19); NONE:

20-22.

VESPERS: 113, 114, 115, 116, 128. COMPLINE: 4, 90, 133.

#### TUESDAY

MATINS: 3, 94. Ist Noct.: 45-51; 2nd Noct.: 52-58.

LAUDS: 66, 50, 42, 56, 148, 149, 150.

PRIME: 7, 8, 9A; TERCE: 119-121; SEXT: 122-124; NONE: 125, 127.

VESPERS: 129-132. COMPLINE: 4, 90, 133.

#### WESDNESDAY

MATINS: 3, 94. Ist Noct.: 59-67; 2nd Noct.: 68-72.

LAUDS: 66, 50, 63, 64, 148, 149, 150.

PRIME: 9B, 10, 11; TERCE, SEXT, NONE as on Tuesday.

VESPERS: 134-137. COMPLINE: 4, 90, 133.

#### THURSDAY

MATINS: 3, 94. Ist Noct.: 73, 74, 76, 77, 78; 2nd Noct.: 79-84.

LAUDS: 66, 50, 87, 89, 148, 149, 150.

PRIME: 12, 13, 14; TERCE, SEXT, NONE, as on Tuesday.

VESPERS: 138, 139, 140. COMPLINE: 4, 90, 133.

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#### FRIDAY

MATINS: 3, 94. 1st Noct.: 85, 86, 88, 92, 93; 2nd Noct.: 95-100.

LAUDS: 66, 50, 75, 91, 148, 149, 150.

PRIME: 15, 16, 17 (1st half). TERCE, SEXT, NONE same as Tuesday.

VESPERS: 141, 143, 144 (1st half). compline: 4, 90, 133.

#### SATURDAY

MATINS: 3, 94. 1st Noct.: 101-104; 2nd Noct.: 105-108.

LAUDS: 66, 50, 142, 148, 149, 150.

PRIME: 17 (2nd half), 18, 19; TERCE, SEXT, NONE same as Tues-

day.

VESPERS: 144 (2nd half), 145, 146, 147. COMPLINE: 4, 90, 133.

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